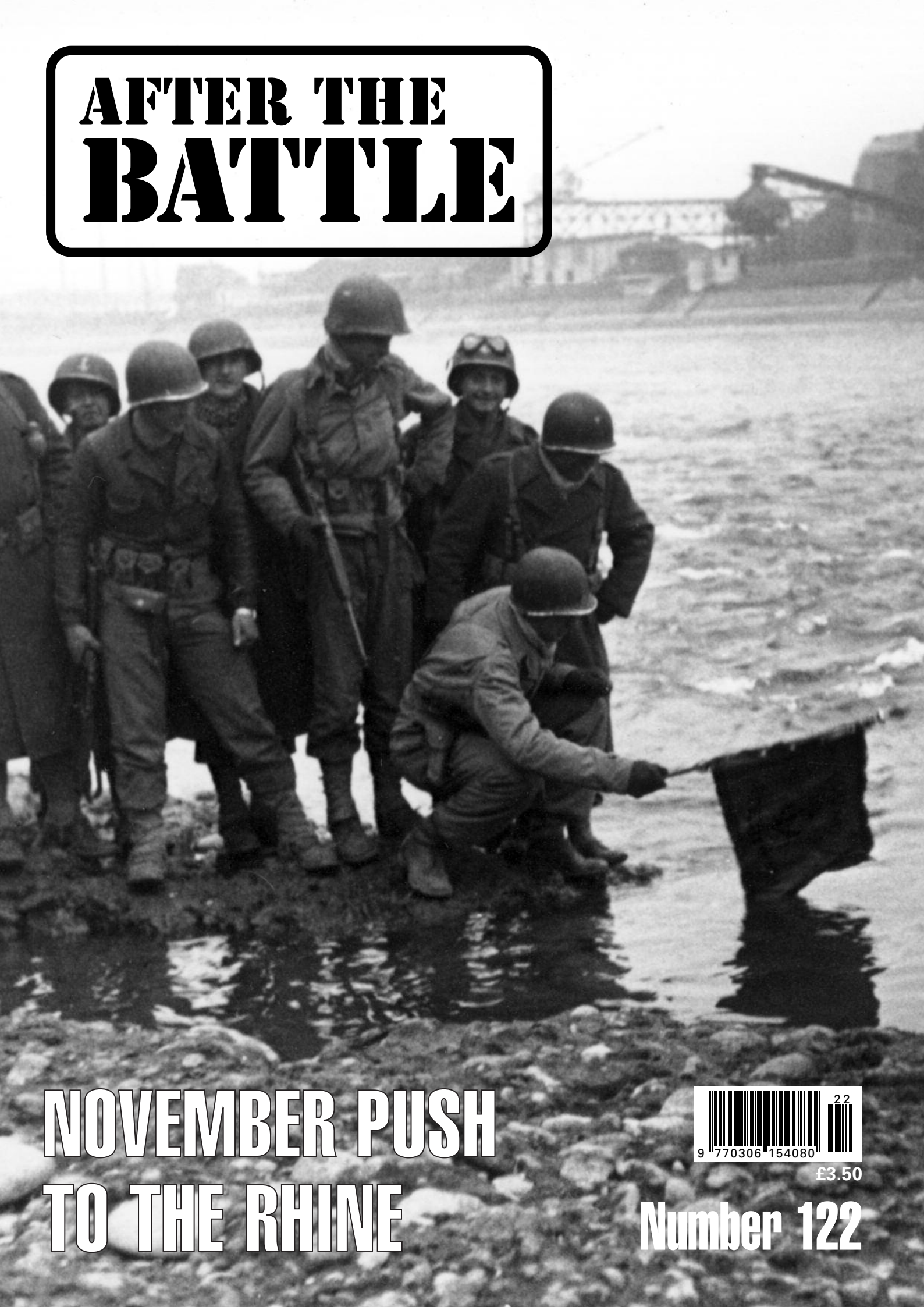
AFTER THE BATTLE



NOVEMBER PUSH TO THE RHINE

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Front Cover: In the bleak autumn and winter of 1944 French and American units of the US 6th Army Group fought a long campaign through the lower Vosges and into the plains of Alsace in an effort to reach the Rhine. At 1830 hours on November 19, a small detachment from the 1ère Division Blindée led by Lieutenant Jean de Loisy reached the river near Rosenau, dipping their unit flag into the Rhine as a symbolic gesture. (ECPAD)

Centre Pages: An amazing discovery — a section of fuselage from a Stirling lost at Arnhem in September 1944 — see page 24. (Frans Ammerlaan)

Back Cover: Members of the Canadian Essex and Kent Scottish Regiment at Lodge Lees, in Kent, recovering the concrete cap badges left behind by their wartime forebears in 1944.

Acknowledgements: The Editor would like to thank Heimdal publishers for making available some of the pictures from their remarkable 480-page book *La Bataille d'Alsace, 1944-1945*.

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In *After the Battle* No. 110, we followed the US 6th Army Group from its landings on the Riviera coast on August 15, 1944, through to its northward drive along the Rhône valley, and ended the story with the Allied spearheads crossing the Doubs river at Besançon. In this issue we take up the continuation of that story with this picture of French troops crossing the Doubs river on October 22 at Pont-de-Roide, 30 kilometres south of Belfort. (US Army)

Following the Allied landings in southern France on August 15, 1944, the union of the 'Overlord' and 'Anvil' armies was achieved on September 11 when elements of the French 2ème Dragons met a patrol from the US 6th Armored Division at Saulieu (see *After the Battle* No. 110). On September 15 General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Supreme Commander of the Allied forces in northern France, assumed operational control of the forces in southern France too. At the same time Headquarters of the US 6th Army Group, under Lieutenant General Jacob L. Devers, became operational in southern France taking command of the US Seventh Army and the French 1ère Armée.

Eisenhower would have preferred transferring the Seventh Army to Lieutenant General Omar N. Bradley's 12th Army Group but that would have reduced the American contingent within 6th Army Group to just a few units: the 1st Airborne Task Force (guarding the Franco-Italian border in the south), some artillery at the front and logistical units along the line of communications to the Mediterranean. In such a situation, with the army group reduced mainly to the 1ère Armée, the French would logically have pressed for French command of it. So, not wishing to have to deal personally with French national interests, Eisenhower had no choice but to keep a sizeable American contingent in the 6th Army Group.

However, the Supreme Commander really had no role to assign to the 6th Army Group. SHAEF's existing plans called for a drive into Germany by only two army formations, one operating north of the Ardennes forest (Field Marshal Bernard L. Montgomery's British 21st Army Group and most of the US First Army of Bradley's 12th Army Group) and the other (the right wing of US First Army) to the south. The US Third Army (on 12th Army Group's right wing) was relegated to a

The Germans had blown the bridge over the Doubs when they continued their withdrawal northwards. The small footbridge had been built a few hundred metres downstream from the ruined span.

NOVEMBER PUSH TO THE RHINE

By Jean Paul Pallud

secondary role, its eastward advance limited to securing bridgeheads over the Moselle river. As to the 6th Army Group, Eisenhower expected little from it, convinced as he was that even the most successful advances in the south had little strategic potential. Devers' army group faced large expanses of terrain highly favourable to the defence — the Vosges mountains, the Rhine river and the Black Forest — and even if his Franco-American forces were somehow able to push through these barriers, the capture of Nuremberg or Munich did not seem especially worthwhile objectives.

As pointed out by Jeffrey J. Clarke and Robert Ross Smith in *Riviera to the Rhine*, the US Army's official history dealing with 6th Army Group's operations in France, there were alternatives that neither Eisenhower nor his SHAEF planners ever considered, namely to send 'a reinforced 6th Army Group north through the Rhenish plains in a vast enveloping manoeuvre against the flank or rear of the German forces defending the Saar and Ruhr regions; or sending it north as far as Frankfurt and then north-east, following the famous Napoleonic route toward Berlin through the critical Fulda corridor.'

Not yet aware of Eisenhower's indifference to their efforts, Devers and his staff drew up plans to cross the Rhine near Rastatt, 50 kilometres north of Strasbourg, from where they would gain good routes leading east and north-east into Germany or, alternatively, north up the Rhine valley to Karlsruhe and Mannheim.

Eisenhower did not object to these plans. As put by Clarke and Smith: 'Possibly SHAEF approved 6th Army Group's offensives toward Strasbourg and the Rhine only because they did not appear to interfere in any way with the northern effort; furthermore, Eisenhower must have hoped that the southern army group's separate line of communications might enable him to increase the 12th Army Group's logistical support at some future date once the capacity of the Mediterranean supply system had been sufficiently expanded. But as long as Devers remained logistically independent, Eisenhower was apparently willing to give him a certain freedom of action.'

In mid-October, the US VI Corps launched an attack aiming at Saint-Dié, one of the cornerstones of the German defence positions at the foot of the western Vosges. On November 4, the US 3rd Division broke through Le Haut Jacques pass, ten kilometres west of Saint-Dié. This Sherman of the 756th Tank Battalion had bogged down at Les Rouges Eaux, a few kilometres before reaching the pass. (US Army)

As the VI Corps pressed for Saint-Dié, the French IIème Corps d'Armée launched a supporting attack in the south on November 3. This picture was taken the following day when elements of the 3ème Division d'Infanterie Algérienne captured Rochesson, 30 kilometres south of Saint-Dié and the key to another road leading to the Vosges high passes. (US Army) *Right:* **Our comparison was taken in front of the village town hall.**

On October 18 at Brussels, Eisenhower, Montgomery and Bradley worked out plans for the November operations of the 21st and 12th Army Groups, and on the 28th Eisenhower issued his Directive No. 114 promulgating his orders for operations in November and December. It confirmed that the main Allied effort would be borne by the 21st Army Group and the left wing of the 12th Army Group. In the centre, the right wing of the US First Army and the US Third Army were to seize the Saar basin, advance northeastwards to the Rhine and secure bridgeheads opposite the Frankfurt area. Timed to support the main effort north of the Ardennes, these operations were clearly subsidiary. The directive confirmed Eisenhower's indifference to the 6th Army Group potential and Devers was told to protect the right flank of the 12th Army Group, clearing the sector west of the Rhine and ultimately establishing bridgeheads in the vicinity of Karlsruhe and Mannheim.

The directive set no firm timetable but it soon turned out that Eisenhower expected the left wing of 12th Army Group to start the offensive sometime between November 1 and 5 with the 21st Army Group to follow about November 10. The Third Army was to launch its attack against the Saar as soon as its logistical situation permitted, but not later than five days after 12th Army Group had jumped off. The directive did not specify a date for the 6th Army Group supporting offensive but, after consulting with Generals Bradley and with Lieutenant General George S. Patton of the Third Army, Lieutenant General Alexander M. Patch of the Seventh Army, and Général Jean de Lattre de Tassigny of the French 1ère Armée, Devers set November 15 as his own target date.

Devers planned to launch both the Seventh Army and the 1ère Armée in a series of attacks. On the Seventh Army's left, the US XV Corps was to start on D-Day, November 15, heading north-eastward for Sarrebourg. The corps was then to swing east and force the Saverne gap. On the army's right wing, the US VI Corps would follow on D+2, advancing through the Vosges mountains to break out onto the Alsatian plains. The corps was then to seize Strasbourg and secure the west bank of the Rhine north and south of the city.

In the sector of the 1ère Armée, further south, the Ier Corps d'Armée, located on the right wing along the Swiss border, was to launch the army's main effort on or about November 15, its task being to breach the Belfort gap. On the army's left wing, the IIème Corps d'Armée was to launch a subsidiary attack in the Vosges sometime between November 10 and 15, both to support the American VI Corps on its left and to divert German attention away from the Belfort gap.

Tactical developments and poor flying conditions soon forced a change in plans and on November 2 Eisenhower and Bradley

US Army photographer Sergeant Irwing Leibowitz pictured this signals team of the 3ème Division d'Infanterie Algérienne using a mule to bring wire up the mountain road at Rochesson on November 4. (US Army)

The French Ier Corps d'Armée started its offensive to breach the Belfort gap on November 14 with the 2ème Division d'Infanterie Marocaine attacking at midday. Two days later, advance units of the division, with elements of the 5ème Division Blindée in support, reached a point one kilometre short of Héricourt and the Lizaine river. These two Shermans of the 5ème Division Blindée were knocked out that day as they entered Issans, five kilometres south of Héricourt. (US Army)

decided to postpone the First Army attacks to the 10th. Hoping to have at least some of his forces attacking earlier, however, Bradley asked Patton to have his Third Army begin its offensive as soon as possible and have his XII Corps, just north of the Seventh Army, attack no later than November 8. Devers visited Patton's command post at Nancy on November 5 but he was apparently not informed of the decisions taken and returned from the briefing with the understanding that Third Army's attack was still scheduled for the 10th.

Consequently, the 6th Army Group headquarters was surprised when word came on November 7 that Third Army's XII Corps would begin its attack on the morning of the 8th. Devers quickly decided to move his starting date forward to November 13 and new orders were immediately sent to General Patch of the Seventh Army and Général de Lattre of the 1ère Armée. The XV Corps and both the French corps were now to attack on the 13th; the VI Corps was to follow on the 15th.

Devers was optimistic. He estimated that the Ier Corps d'Armée would be in the Rhine valley by December 1 and that the XV Corps would have crossed the Vosges and broken out onto the Alsatian plains by the same date. As Clarke and Smith commented: 'Devers' own prediction was for crossing the Rhine above Strasbourg and exploiting north up the Rhine valley toward Karlsruhe, thus trapping the German 1. Armee and isolating the Saar industrial region in one sweep. This time he would show the other Allied commanders what his underrated forces could do.'

By mid-November, 6th Army Group's front coincided with that of the German 19. Armee, for Heeresgruppe G, to which the latter belonged, had just extended the army sector northward to the Rhine-Marne Canal which also marked the boundary between the Allied 6th and 12th Army Groups.

After the hectic withdrawal from southern France in the summer, 19. Armee's lines were stretched to breaking point but the difficult terrain in the Vosges had slowed the Allied advance in the last weeks and saved the army from collapse. To make things worse General der Infanterie Friedrich

The same spot in Issans today. The picture at the top of this page had been taken two days after the battle by which time the two disabled tanks had already been moved from the spot where they had been hit in order to clear the road.

Wiese, the army commander, could not count on any reinforcement, for his sector had a low priority on the western front. At Ob. West, Generalfeldmarschall Gerd von Rundstedt's major concern was to counter the expected Allied drive against the Ruhr and he accordingly gave priority to Heeresgruppe B which defended that sector. Also, von Rundstedt was striving to assemble forces for the Ardennes counter-offensive scheduled for late November and to this end he had already moved several armoured units from Heeresgruppe G to Heeresgruppe B. Finally, General der Panzertruppen Hermann Balck, the Heeresgruppe G commander, had to give priority to his 1. Armee which was defending the Saar region. The 21. Panzer-Division would soon be taken away from 19. Armee and diverted north of the Rhine-Marne Canal to join the 1. Armee and Panzerbrigade 106, Heeresgruppe G's only significant reserve, followed likewise. Thus, the only armour left to Wiese were some assault gun units.

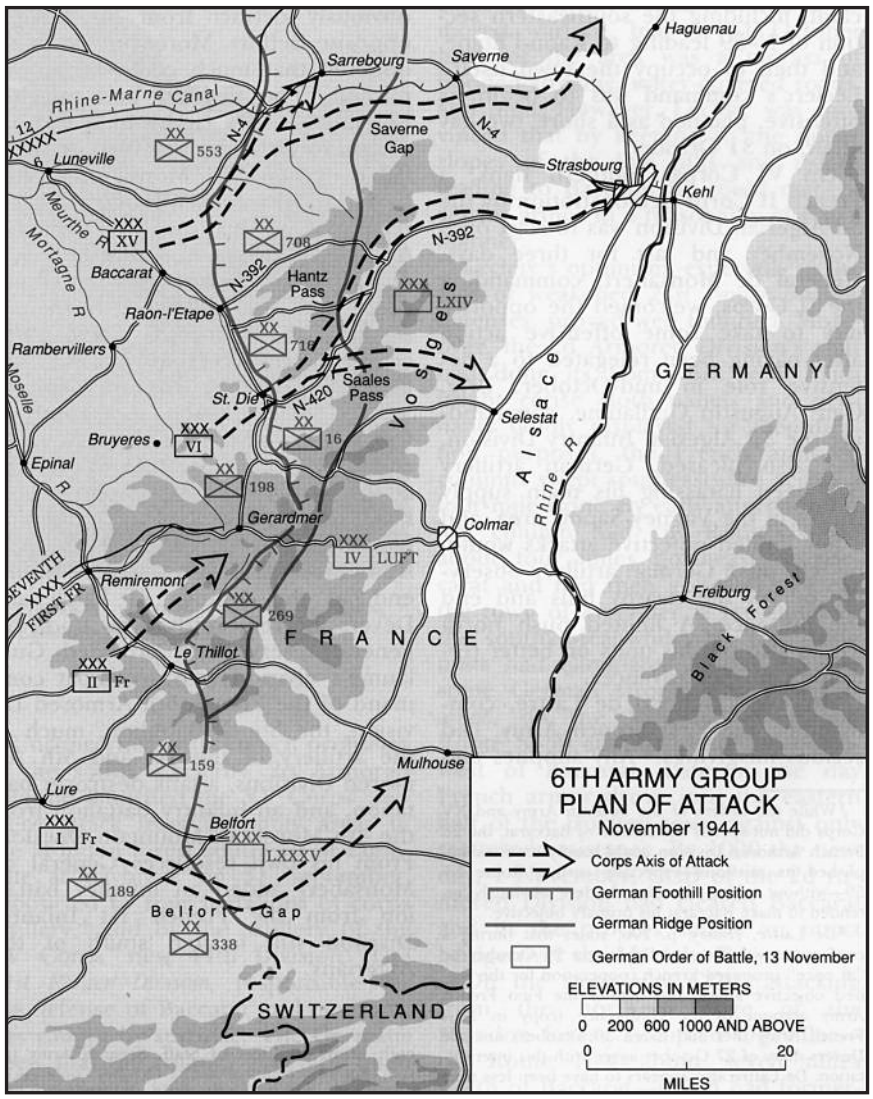
On the 19. Armee's right wing, the LXIV. Armeekorps had in the line, from north to south, the 553. Volksgrenadier-Division, made up of only two regiments; Grenadier-Regiment 951; the weak 21. Panzer-Division; the battered 716. Infanterie-Division and what was left of the badly damaged 16. Volksgrenadier-Division. On November 8, the 708. Volksgrenadier-Division began moving into the lines on the left of the 553. Volksgrenadier-Division, first relieving Grenadier-Regiment 951 and then taking over from the 21. Panzer-Division. LXIV. Armeekorps faced the Seventh Army's XV Corps and most of the VI Corps.

In the army's centre, the IV. Luftwaffen-Feldkorps defended the southern section of the Vosges below Saint-Dié with two divisions: the understrength but experienced 198. Infanterie-Division, most of which confronted the VI Corps' southern wing; and the fairly good 269. Infanterie-Division, recently arrived from Norway, which faced the northern wing of IIème Corps d'Armée.

Finally, at the southern end of Wiese's front, the LXXXV. Armeekorps was responsible for holding the approaches to Belfort and blocking the Belfort gap with, from north to south, the 159. and the 189. Infanterie-Divisions, both relatively fresh if understrength, and the desperately weak 338. Infanterie-Division. The 159. Infanterie-Division faced the southern wing of the IIème Corps d'Armée and the other two confronted the Ier Corps d'Armée. In static defensive positions to the rear, Festung-Brigade Belfort held the city of that name and the old forts that surrounded it. The brigade comprised two fortress artillery battalions and several fortress machine-gun companies but many of its guns were captured French and Russian pieces for which little ammunition was available. It had just received 30 of the potent 88mm anti-tank guns but some vital parts, such as the gun sights, still awaited delivery. On November 7, Ob. West informed Balck that the LXXXV. Armeekorps headquarters was to be transferred to Heeresgruppe B and on the 14th Generalkommando Dehner arrived to take its place. Until then this skeletal staff had controlled provisional units along the Swiss border and though it was promoted to the status of army corps on November 18, becoming LXIII. Armeekorps, it still lacked the normal corps support units.

Wiese's army had virtually no reserves from Colmar south to the Swiss border. He could only call on the NCO training centre at Colmar — 1,500 men in all, counting cadets, instructors and staff — and on the 30. SS-Waffen-Grenadier-Division, stationed near Mulhouse waiting for transportation east across the Rhine. This unit of conscripted Russian nationals had mutinied in September and though it had been reorganised with

When the 6th Army Group commander, Lieutenant General Jacob Devers, drew up his plans to cross the Rhine, the Supreme Commander, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, directed him only to clear the sector west of the river. This picture was taken at the command post of the French Ier Corps d'Armée at Beaucourt on November 25 when Eisenhower and Devers toured the French front with Lieutenant General Omar N. Bradley of US 12th Army Group (see page 23). L-R: Bradley; Général Jean de Lattre de Tassigny, 1ère Armée; Général Emile Béthouart, Ier Corps d'Armée; Devers and Eisenhower. (ECPAD)



a more-substantial German cadre (one German to three Russians) it was still considered unreliable.

The German weakness in the Belfort sector reflected a major difference of opinion between Generals Balck and Wiese regarding the intentions of the French. While Wiese was convinced that they would soon attack in the Belfort gap itself, where the terrain was better, Balck thought that they would resume their advance across the Vosges, aiming for Colmar. Once they had reached the Alsatian plain, so he believed, the French would turn south to attack the Belfort gap from the rear. Any direct attack toward the gap, Balck believed, was only an effort to divert his attention away from a major threat across the Vosges. Accordingly, he insisted that Wiese keep two of his best divisions, the 198. and 269. Infanterie-Divisions, in the Vosges mountains. As a result, the flat and difficult to defend area south of Belfort (the focal point of the actual French attack) was left to the weak 338. Infanterie-Division which had only two regiments, both rated suitable for static defence only, and was short of artillery. All its infantry was deployed in its thin front line and it had no reserves.

In early November, Général de Lattre had both his corps in the line with two infantry divisions each, having withdrawn his two armoured divisions for rest and refitting. On the 1ère Armée's left, Général Aimé de Monsabert's IIème Corps d'Armée faced the mountains and narrow passes of the Vosges with, from north to south, the 3ème Division d'Infanterie Algérienne (DIA) and the 1ère Division de Marche d'Infanterie (DMI). On the right, Général Emile Béthouart's Ier Corps d'Armée was confronting the German defences of the Belfort gap. Guarding its left flank was a provisional force, Groupement Molle; in the centre, up to the Doubs river, was the 2ème Division d'Infanterie Marocaine (DIM); and on the right wing, from the Doubs to the Swiss border, was the 9ème Division d'Infanterie Coloniale (DIC).

Béthouart's corps was to launch the main effort on November 13, with the 2ème DIM first driving eastward to the Lizaine valley and then seizing Belfort with a surprise attack from the south. Failing that, the division was to sweep round Belfort on the north and south, attacking the metropolitan area and the surrounding forts from the rear. De Lattre had reinforced the 2ème DIM with two armoured combat commands of the 5ème Division Blindée, CC4 and CC5. On the corps' right wing, the 9ème DIC – with tank reinforcement provided by CC2 of the 1ère Division Blindée — was to press northeastward to the general line of the AIlaine river between Morvillars and Delle.

The VI Corps renewed its attack in the Vosges on November 12. On the corps' northern wing the US 100th Division started south-eastwards through a forested area. It was the first time the 'Century' Division was going into combat. Hindered by rain and muddy mountain trails, on the 16th the GIs finally reached the crest of a hill from where they overlooked the Plaine river valley, in the rear of the German defences at Raon-l'Etape. These men of the division's 398th Regiment were pictured on November 17 when the American attackers started to pour down the hills. By November 18, Raon-l'Etape was clear of German troops. (US Army)

The IIème Corps d'Armée, on the left, was at first to maintain strong pressure along its front to keep the German attention focused on the Vosges. Depending on developments in the Ier Corps d'Armée sector, it was ultimately to drive across the mountain range and link up with the Ier Corps d'Armée in the vicinity of Mulhouse.

During the night of November 9/10, the Ier Corps d'Armée attack units began moving up to their start lines. However, continued rains had made the roads impassable for

By November 1944, all three French armoured divisions that had been equipped by the Americans were fighting with the 6th Army Group: the 2ème Division Blindée was operating on the left wing under the US XV Corps of the Seventh Army, and the 1ère and 5ème Divisions Blindées were on the right with the 1ère Armée. These Shermans of the 2ème Régiment de Cuirassiers, part of CC1 of the 1ère Division Blindée, were pictured in November 1944. (ECPAD)

On November 19, CC3 of the 1ère Division Blindée struck from the sector of Courtelevant and pushed eastward in three columns through Seppois and Waldighofen. Advancing along minor roads, a small detachment under Lieutenant Jean de Loisy made good progress and late in the afternoon these M5 light tanks of the 5ème Régiment de Chasseurs d'Afrique were pictured at Kappelen, less that ten kilometres from the Rhine river. (ECPAD)

A low sun rises over Kappelen on a beautiful winter morning. The restaurant on the left is still in business under the same 'two keys' name, although the German version of 1944, 'Gasthaus zu den zwei Schlüsseln', has since been turned into French: 'Café aux deux clefs'.

wheeled or even tracked vehicles and many temporary bridges had been washed out. On the 11th, Général Béthouart suggested postponing the attack until the weather improved and de Lattre finally approved some changes. Agreeing with Béthouart that the 9ème DIC might be better able to contend with the mud, rain, snow and increasingly cold weather than the 2ème DIM, they pushed the start of the latter's attack back to the 14th. De Lattre also instructed Béthouart to move his armour forward on the 14th, earlier than planned, so as to be ready to exploit any success the two infantry divisions might achieve.

When November 13 dawned after hours of heavy snow, a complete lack of visibility forced the cancellation of the 9ème DIC's attack. Next morning, November 14, low clouds continued to cover much of the sector but some of it cleared north of the Doubs and de Lattre and Béthouart again quickly adjusted their plans. The 2ème DIM was directed to attack at midday after a two-hour artillery preparation, their attack to be followed by the left wing of the 9ème DIC at 1400 hours.

That very morning, Generalleutnant Friederich-August Schack, the newly appointed commander of the LXIII. Armeekorps, decided to have a personal look at the front. Having picked up Generalmajor Hans Oschmann, the commander of the 338. Infanterie-Division, he drove to an observation post near Bretigney, ten kilometres west of Montbéliard. Suddenly, the French artillery began a devastating barrage that immobilised their party for over two hours. As they started back eastward through woods turned into shambles by the gun barrage, they bumped into small groups of advancing French infantry. Oschmann was killed and the Generals' two aides captured, but Schack managed to escape, getting back to his command post at Belfort before dark. Documents captured by the French soldiers revealed that Oschmann, far from expecting a major attack, had concluded that the French were digging in for the winter.

The left wing of the 2ème DIM gained little ground against the 189. Infanterie-Division but in the centre and on the right the French attack broke through the lines of the 338. Infanterie-Division and advanced over three kilometres. On the right, with its attack delayed until 1400 hours, the 9ème DIC found the units of the 338. Infanterie-Division south of the Doubs on the alert, yet pushed forward. In the evening, while army commander Wiese directed the LXIV. Armeekorps to disengage the 338. Infanterie-Division's third regiment from the Saint-Dié area and speed it back to the Belfort front, corps commander Schack decided to release

Left: **It was about 1830 hours on the 19th when Loisy's detachment reached the Rhine between Rosenau and Huningue. As so often with this kind of pictures, it is difficult to tell whether this shot of soldiers rushing to the river bank and dropping their unit flag into the water shows the genuine 'first reach' or a second or a third, or even a later re-enactment. (ECPAD)**
Right: **The same length of river bank nearly 60 years later. A plaque (behind the photographer) now records the death of Sous-Lieutenant J. P. Douzou, killed on this spot on November 30, 1944.**

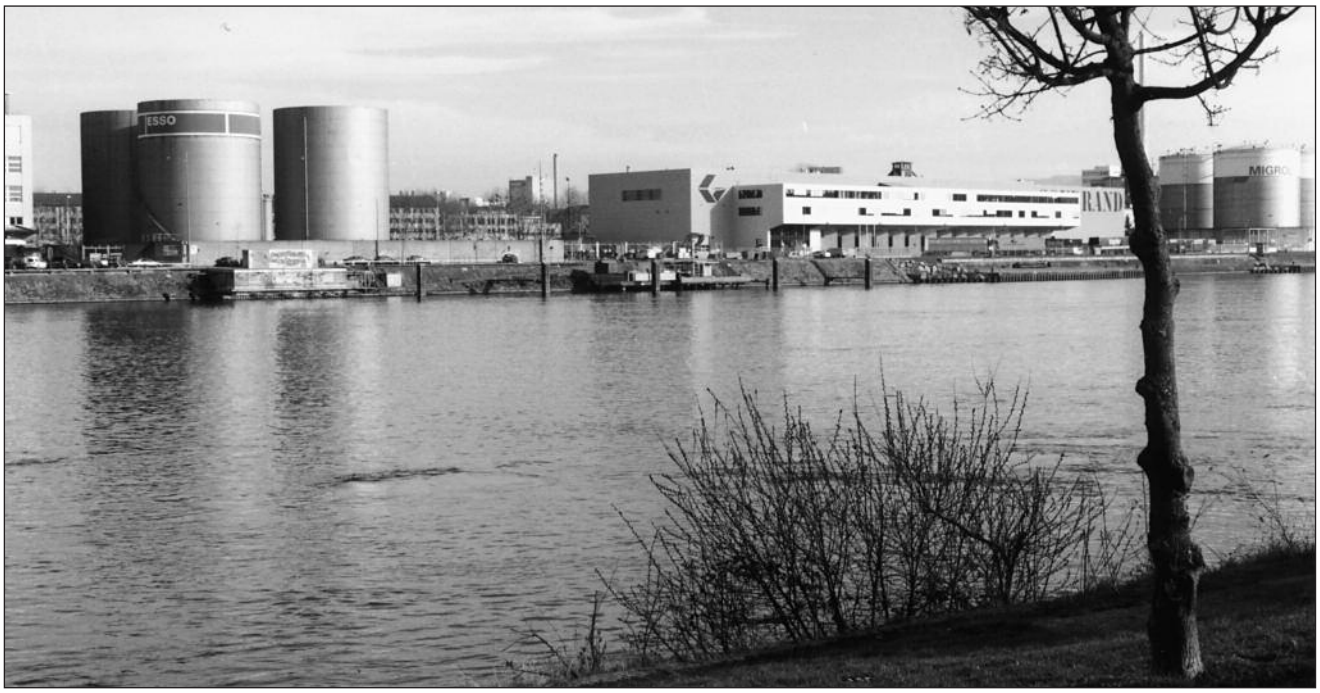
More troops soon followed and joined up with Lieutenant de Loisy on the Rhine bank. This M8 Gun Motor Carriage — a 75mm howitzer mounted on the chassis of an M5 light tank — might be the one that fired a few shells across the Rhine that day, historically the first French artillery fire to hit Germany since the Blitzkrieg days of 1940. (ECPAD)

his only reserve, three infantry battalions, in support of the 338. Infanterie-Division. The French continued their advance on the 15th and that evening, faced with the complete disorganisation of the 338. Infanterie-Division, Wiese had to approve a limited withdrawal to the Lizaine river.

Previously slowed by poor roads and extensive minefields, the French armour joined the battle on November 16. On the left, the 2ème DIM, now backed by elements of the 5ème Division Blindée, closed in on Héricourt and the Lizaine river. On the 17th, bridgeheads were established across the Lizaine between Luze, Héricourt and Montbéliard. On the right, supported by CC2 and CC3 of the 1ère Division Blindée, the 9ème DIC gathered momentum and progressed five kilometres on the 16th to reach Abbevillers the following day.

De Lattre and Béthouart now issued new orders. The 1ère Division Blindée was directed to assemble in the Abbevillers—Herimoncourt area and strike east between the Rhône-Rhine Canal and the Swiss border. The 9ème DIC was to mop up behind the armour, secure the left flank and seize bridgeheads across the canal. Once bridges were in place, they planned to have the whole 5ème Division Blindée over the canal, bypass the urban area of Belfort on the east and exploit north-east toward Cernay and Colmar.

Meanwhile, the difference of opinion between Balck and Wiese as to the importance of the French operations around Belfort still had a paralysing effect on the German reaction. It was not until the evening of the 17th, and probably because of pressure from Ob. West, that Balck finally agreed that these operations were significant. He then approved the movement of the 198. Infanterie-Division and one regiment of the 269. Infanterie-Division to the Belfort gap. He also gave Wiese permission to pull the LXIII. Armeekorps back to a new line of defence from Héricourt south-east to the Swiss border, a measure that would greatly reduce the frontage to be held. The 338. Infanterie-Division began withdrawing after midnight with plans to reform along the Allaine river but dawn of the 18th found the troops still retreating east. The French gave no respite and, while the Germans succeeded



The borders of France, Germany and Switzerland join here and the oil tanks seen across the Rhine are actually in the latter country. The street in Huningue leading to this spot is aptly named Rue des Trois Frontières, the street of the three frontiers.

The German 198. Infanterie-Division counter-attacked the French early on November 21 with one company of Panzerjäger-Abteilung 654 in support and cut the road near Courtelevant, eight kilometres east of Delle, in the rear of CC2 of the 1ère Division Blindée. This Jagdpanther of Panzerjäger-Abteilung 654 was lost during that operation. Though it cannot be seen in this picture, its tactical number was '122', showing it to belong to 2. Zug (platoon) of the 1. Kompanie. By noon, CC4 had cleared the enemy road-block but the Germans soon cut the road again and CC4 could only re-open it late in the afternoon. (ECPAD)

to hold their new lines at Morvillars, the 1ère Division Blindée broke into the Allaine valley to the south and pushed north across the river.

The French advance continued the next day, November 19, when CC3 started out from Courtelevant before dawn, moving eastward in three columns. Pushing through Seppois and over the Largue river, the armoured spearheads soon reached Waldighofen, only 20 kilometres from the Rhine river. In the afternoon an advance detachment heading on along small roads avoided the German defences and at about 1800 hours reached the Rhine near Rosenau, 100 kilometres south of Strasbourg. More forces followed and some shells were soon fired across the Rhine, the first French artillery fire to hit Germany since 1940.

De Lattre received another piece of good news in the evening when 6th Army Group made known that Devers had again been able to postpone the departure of the 1ère Division Blindée for the Atlantic coast, this time until mid-December.

On the German side, the situation in the evening of the 19th was such that General Wiese considered abandoning Belfort and pulling his army's southern flank all the way north to Mulhouse. However, von Rundstedt refused to give up Belfort and directed Balck not only to hold the city but to mount a counter-attack south of it to cut off the French penetration.

The 9ème DIC failed to secure crossings over the Rhône-Rhine Canal (Grenadier-Regiment 490 had just reached the front and deployed defensively on the canal), making it impossible for the 5ème Division Blindée to begin the planned drive toward Cernay, so de Lattre ordered the 1ère Division Blindée, further to the left, to push north from the point where it had reached the Rhine to the town of Chalampé where there were rail and road bridges across the river. He was still confident that the 5ème Division Blindée would cross the Rhône-Rhine Canal on the 20th and start north toward Colmar, parallel with the 1ère Division Blindée's advance along the Rhine.

Knowing from his own sources (he was not an 'Ultra' recipient) that the 198. Infanterie-Division had moved out of the Vosges, de Lattre expected it to shortly join the battle in the Belfort gap and so he gave the 9ème DIC the task of securing and enlarging the slender penetration to the Rhine.

The 198. Infanterie-Division had actually assembled a regimental combat team in the Dannemarie area and late on the 19th it launched a counter-attack southward toward

The French Army archives have no precise caption for the picture of Jagdpanther 122. However, thanks to a wartime report by Leutnant Enghoffer of Panzerjäger-Abteilung 654, Jean Paul was able to trace the unit's movements in Alsace and he finally found that No. 122 had been disabled at Lepuis-Neuf, three kilometres north of Courtelevant. Arriving from the direction of Suarce, it reached this crossroads from the right and was turning left when it was hit in the flank or rear by French fire coming from the southern entrance of the hamlet, the Courtelevant road.

Delle. By next morning, the lead units had reached the towns of Brebotte, Vellescot and Suarce — about halfway to Delle – when they ran into French armour and infantry deploying for an attack toward Dannemarie and inconclusive fighting took place throughout the afternoon. To the east, elements of the 30. SS-Waffen-Grenadier-Division had also attacked hoping to retake Seppois. They reached a point two kilometres north of it but then had to withdraw under French pressure.

Early on the 20th, the 2ème DIM penetrated into the city of Belfort and began the slow process of eliminating the last German defenders.

While CC2 and the 9ème DIC turned back the German counter-attack, the rest of the 1ère Division Blindée started its drive north. From 1330 hours, CC3 struck north-west toward Mulhouse from Bartenheim, five kilometres west of the Rhine at Rosenau. The armoured task force met little opposition and its leading elements soon pushed into the part of Mulhouse that lies south of the Rhône-Rhine Canal. Meanwhile, on the left, CC1 had driven to Altkirch, 15 kilometres to the south-west of Mulhouse, and by dark its lead units were inside the city. The following day, November 21, after a sharp encounter with elements of the 30. SS-Waffen-Grenadier-Division, CC1 cleared Altkirch and advanced farther north along the Rhône-Rhine Canal to Illfurth. That same day, CC3 at Mulhouse crossed the canal and cleared most of the city on the north bank.

The commitment of CC1 and CC3 at Altkirch and Mulhouse had left only a small force of the 1ère Division Blindée along the Rhine. Consisting of an armoured infantry company and a tank destroyer platoon, Détachement Colonnier nevertheless embarked on the task of driving north to Chalampé intending to seizing the Rhine bridges there. The force started out from Kembs on the 20th and arrived at the southern outskirts of Ottmarsheim, five kilometres south of Chalampé the following morning. However, the Germans counter-attacked on the 23rd and the small detachment had to withdraw. The French would not come any closer to Chalampé for another two and a half months.

On November 21, while the French were struggling to untangle CC2 and CC4 from the many traffic jams that blocked the roads all the way back to Montbéliard, the 198. Infanterie-Division moved and cut the vital N463 road near Courtelevant, in the rear of CC2. Elements of CC4 cleared the road-block by noon but the Germans soon cut the road again and CC4 could only re-open it late in the afternoon. These temporary interdictions

Facing strong resistance, the 2ème Division d'Infanterie Marocaine slowly fought its way into the western and northern parts of Belfort on November 20. This picture was taken two days later when its leading elements were about to reach the bridges across the Savoureuse river in the centre of the town. German snipers are firing at these troops as they cautiously go forward. An M5 light tank from Combat Command 6 of the 5ème Division Blindée lends a hand. (US Army)

The building has been razed to the ground and the plot between the Quai Schneider and the Savoureuse river (off to the right) is now a parking lot.

Left: **While the forward troops were fighting to take the bridges before the Germans could blow them (many bridges were in fact taken intact), Belfort west of the Savoureuse was being cleared from what Germans remained. (US Army)** *Right:* **Jean Paul was dicing with death when he took this comparison right in the middle of a junction on Avenue du Général Leclerc.**

An M5 light tank of Combat Command 3 of the 1ère Division Blindée rolls into Mulhouse on November 21. The greater part of this French city lies south of the Doller river. By the evening, all of this had been conquered except for one small area in the east where the Germans had dug in around a barracks. (ECPAD)

Mulhouse is a large city and, with the road signs in the wartime picture being too general to give any clue, it was not easy to find where it was taken. It turned out to be on this corner on Rue Aristide Briand.

of the supply lines of the 1ère Division Blindée greatly hampered the French effort to project more strength along the Rhine.

The 198. Infanterie-Division, with elements of Panzerjäger-Abteilung 654 in support, continued its southward counter-attack on the 22nd and its Grenadier-Regiment 308 took Réchésy and Pfetterhouse in the morning. The French halted their thrust from Pfetterhouse to Seppois, as they quickly moved to stop elements of the 30. SS-Waffen-Grenadier-Division heading for Seppois. Expecting that Panzerbrigade 106 and Sturmgeschütz-Brigade 280 would reach the sector during the day to assist, Wiese directed the 198. Infanterie-Division to move out on the 23rd without waiting for the armour. He also ordered the 30. SS-Waffen-Grenadier-Division on the left wing to resume its southward attack against Seppois.

However, the SS troops came across CC1 of the 1ère Division Blindée and made no progress on the 23rd. Meanwhile, on the right, Grenadier-Regiment 308 pressed on and succeeded to again cut the N463, this time west of Seppois, and to control the roads in and out of Switzerland to the south. The lead units of the 198. Infanterie-Division were now dangerously overextended and could only hold these positions if the promised armoured elements arrived in the afternoon. But nothing came. Transportation problems had halted the movement of Sturmgeschütz-Brigade 280 and Balck had sent Panzerbrigade 106 elsewhere. Having learnt that a bridge across a canal in the middle of the Harth forest had been recaptured, he had directed the brigade to use that bridge, bypass Mulhouse on the east, make a feint toward the area between Altkirch and Mulhouse, and then drive to Seppois. The armoured brigade made piecemeal advances during the afternoon of the 23rd but its leading elements soon became engaged in a lengthy duel with CC2 and were unable to advance southward.

The non-arrival of the expected armoured support sealed the fate of Grenadier-Regiment 308 for the French regained control of the N463 during the afternoon, thus isolating the regiment from the rest of the 198. Infanterie-Division north of the road. On November 24, the French swept the Réchésy—Pfetterhouse area and what was left of the German regiment, less than 300 men, crossed the border into Switzerland to be interned.

On November 22, impressed by the progress of the 1ère DMI in the Vosges, de Lattre had issued ambitious orders for a general exploitation calling for the IIème Corps d'Armée to push east across the Vosges, through the Bussang and Schlucht passes, and take Cernay. Once the Ier and IIème

Left: **This M3 half-track was knocked out in Mulhouse on November 21 when the French assaulted one of the German strong points before falling back to wait for reinforcements.**

The picture was taken the following day. (US Army) *Right:* **Jean Paul had another difficult search across the city before he finally found that the building still exists on Rue de Colmar.**

Left: **The fight for the barracks continued on November 22 and this picture was taken after tanks and infantry had assaulted what is described as the Gestapo barracks. The M3 half-track seen on the previous page stood just off this picture to the left. (US Army)** *Right:* **The old barracks have been replaced by a new fire brigade building.**

From positions in Rue Vauban, in front of the Sainte Jeanne d'Arc Church, Sherman tanks of the 2ème Régiment de Chasseurs d'Afrique fire from point-blank range at the Lefebvre barracks, one of the last points of resistance in Mulhouse, on November 23. The tanks will soon charge through the gates but the last German defenders were not to evacuate the barracks before the night of November 24/25. (US Army) *Below:* **A corner of Mulhouse which has changed little.**

Corps d'Armée had linked up, they would then drive north to Colmar and Strasbourg. However, when he learned on the 24th that the 1ère DMI would be pulled out within a few days to move to the Atlantic coast, de Lattre realised that his plans were too ambitious. He issued new instructions, ordering a double envelopment by the Ier and IIème Corps d'Armée with the pincers to close at Burnhaupt. The manoeuvre started at dawn on November 25 and the pincers closed at Burnhaupt on the afternoon of the 28th, after much bitter fighting. The operation was a clear success, bagging some 10,000 German prisoners.

The last German defenders evacuated Mulhouse on November 25, the same day that they evacuated Belfort, and the end of November saw the French consolidating their gains in and around Belfort, while the Germans were building up new defences along the line of the Doller river west of Mulhouse and holding tenaciously to the mountainous terrain north of Masevaux.

The attack by US XV Corps to force the Saverne gap began on November 13, the US 44th and 79th Divisions each jumping off with two regiments abreast. On the 16th, to ensure that the offensive maintained its momentum, Major General Wade Haislip, the corps commander, in addition committed elements of the French 2ème Division Blindée. The following day, the division's Groupement Tactique V (GTV) struck east from Montigny and seized Badonviller, the key to the whole German defence in the sector, and the right wing of the 708. Volksgrenadier-Division collapsed on the 18th. These elements of the 1er Régiment de Spahis were pictured in Brouville, 12 kilometres west of Badonviller, on November 17. (US Army)

The objectives set by the US XV Corps for the November offensive were to capture Sarrebourg, force the Saverne gap, and prepare to exploit east of the Vosges. With cavalry forces covering along the Rhine-Marne Canal, the US 44th Division was to make the main effort initially and seize Sarrebourg from the west and north. The US 79th Division would then join in and the two divisions were to continue the offensive to the north-east and east. The French 2ème Division Blindée, placed under command of the American corps, would remain in corps reserve as exploitation force, ready to strike for the Saverne gap when the infantry divisions had begun breaking through the German defences.

The XV Corps attack would meet elements of three Volksgrenadier divisions: north of the Rhine-Marne Canal was part of the 361. Volksgrenadier-Division under

One building has been razed to the ground and the pile of manure in front of the farmhouse has gone but otherwise the passage of 59 years has brought very little change to this part of Brouville.

LXXXIX. Armeekorps (1. Armee) while south of the waterway were the 553. and half of the 708. Volksgrenadier-Divisions under LXIV. Armeekorps (19. Armee). Knowing that neither German corps had any mobile reserves, the American corps commander, Major General Wade H. Haislip, expected that the enemy defence would be spotty and so he instructed his division commanders to have their lead units bypass isolated strong points and leave them to follow-up forces.

By the evening of November 12, wet snow blanketed the corps sector, streams were flooded and many roads and bridges were under water, and General Devers entertained thoughts of postponing the attack. However, gambling that the Germans might not expect an attack under such adverse conditions, he finally decided to go on.

The 44th Division jumped off on schedule early on November 13, attacking along the railway line to Sarrebourg behind a strong artillery preparation, with the 324th Infantry Regiment on the left and the 71st Infantry on the right. The men of the 553. Volksgrenadier-Division quickly recovered from the bombardment and responded with heavy and accurate artillery, mortar and machine-gun fire. The gains during the day were disappointing as were the operations on the following day.

Major General Robert L. Spragins, the 44th Division commander, then decided to commit his reserve, the 114th Infantry, on a northern swing, across the front of the other two regiments, sweeping through the German defences from the flank and rear. The manoeuvre proved successful and by the evening of the 15th had completey disrupted the 553. Volksgrenadier-Division. The 114th Infantry and the 106th Cavalry Group mopped up the left flank on the 16th, and the next day the 324th and 71st Infantry resumed their advance east, passing through the 114th which then reverted back into reserve. On the 19th, pushing along the axis of the N4, the 71st Infantry came within sight of the Marne Canal, ten kilometres short of the division's objective, Sarrebourg.

South of the 44th Division, the 314th Infantry of the 79th Division had reached Halloville on November 14, while the 315th Infantry on the right had pushed toward Badonville. The 708. Volksgrenadier-Division prepared a counter-attack to hit the Halloville penetration but a force of the 315th Infantry backed by tanks and tank destroyers struck first into the German assembly area east of Halloville. The surprised German reserves were dispersed and most of the 708. Volksgrenadier-Division's assault guns were lost in the failure. The Germans made two more attempts to restore the situation in the sector on the 15th, none with any success, and the 79th Division took Harbouey and continued its advance toward Sarrebourg.

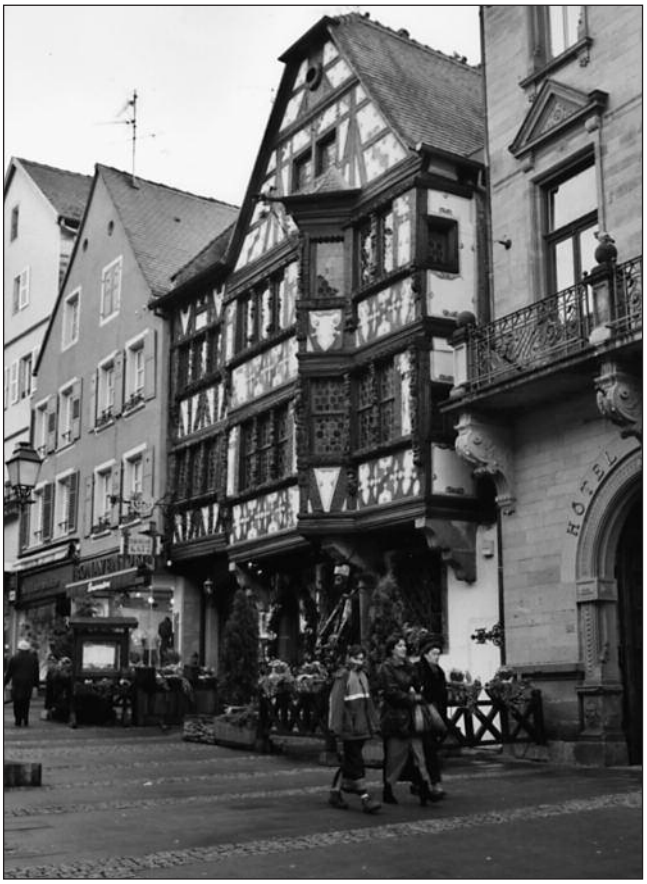
On November 19, General Haislip turned loose the 2ème Division Blindée, with the town of Saverne as its first objective, and Général Leclerc started off with two combat commands, GTD on the left and GTL on the right. Task Force Rouvillois, the northern column of GTD, struck east early on November 21, crossed the main north-south RN61 highway at Siewiller and pushed on as far as La Petite-Pierre, in the heart of the Low Vosges. Behind the French task force, the US 106th Cavalry Group secured the left flank, taking Baerendorf, Weyer and Drulingen. (ECPAD)

The two road signs faintly visible in the wartime picture, pointing to Eschwiller on one side and Drulingen on the other, enabled Jean Paul to trace the scene to Weyer, 12 kilometres west of La Petite-Pierre.

Another French Army photograph, probably taken on the same day, of men of the 2ème Division Blindée in Weyer. (ECPAD)

Though it was winter time when Jean Paul took this comparison, the lack of snow rather spoiled the seasonal atmosphere.

Task Force Minjonnet, GTL's northern column, reached Saverne from the south-west on the morning of November 22 and quickly crossed the western part of the town to continue to its next objective ten kilometres to the north-west: the town of Phalsbourg. On their way, the French surprised and captured



Generalmajor Hans Bruhn, the commander of the 553. Volksgrenadier-Division, and some of the LXXXIX. Armeekorps headquarters personnel. (ECPAD) *Right:* **Luckily, the town of Saverne did not suffer too much damage during the war and these beautiful old houses near the town hall still remain.**

During the night of November 15/16, the left wing of the 553. Volksgrenadier-Division fell back in good order to Blâmont and re-established a defensive line on the Vezouse river while the disorganised right wing of the 708. Voksgrenadier-Division occupied the line south of Cirey-sur-Vezouse.

To ensure that the offensive maintained its momentum, General Haislip now committed the 2ème Division Blindée. One of its combat commands, Groupement Tactique R (GTR), began to push south-east from Halloville on November 16 and quickly disorganised the communication lines of the 708. Volksgrenadier-Division. Units of Groupement Tactique V (GTV) joined the attack the following day, seizing Badonviller. The right wing of the 708. Volksgrenadier-Division collapsed on the 18th enabling GTR and GTV to roll northward and capture bridges at Cirey. That same day, the 79th Division walked unopposed into Blâmont.

During the night of November 18/19, the left wing of the 553. Volksgrenadier-Division withdrew to establish a new defensive line from Richeval south and east through Tanconville and Lafrimbolle. The American and French attackers left the Germans no pause and by noon on the 19th, the 314th Infantry was nearing Richeval, the 315th had passed through Tanconville, and the spearheads of GTR were approaching Lafrimbolle in the mountains. At 1345 hours, Haislip turned the rest of the 2ème Division Blindée loose, with Saverne on the far side of the Vosges as immediate objective.

Left: **As all this was going on, GTL's other column, Task Force Massu, which had broken out into the Alsatian plains the previous afternoon, had turned north in the morning and reached the eastern entrance of Saverne. Massu waited there for Task Force Minjonnet to clear the place and then entered the town from the east at 1400 hours. The Germans were taken completely by surprise and all the bridges in town were captured intact and over 800 prisoners taken. (ECPAD)** *Right:* **The Grande Rue in Saverne today, looking eastwards in the direction from where Massu arrived nearly six decades ago.**

Général Leclerc (Philippe de Hauteclocque, nom de guerre Leclerc), the division commander, planned to lead off with two combat commands, GTD and GTL. After crossing the Rhine-Marne Canal, the two task forces of GTD were to bypass Sarrebourg to the west and north and head east across the Vosges well north of the Saverne gap. Once on the other side of the mountains, they were to descend on Saverne from the north and north-east. South of the canal, GTL, also with two columns, was to push east over small roads and cross the Vosges south of the Saverne gap. Having reached the Alsatian plains, the two task forces were to swing north to link up with GTD. The division's third combat command, GTR, would support GTL in the south and secure the division's extended right flank. The fourth combat command, GTV, would be in reserve, ready to reinforce either GTD or GTL. Upon relief by the 44th and 79th Divisions, the 2ème Division Blindée was to push on to Haguenau, about 20 kilometres north of Strasbourg. However, XV Corps warned Leclerc that he might have to withdraw back to Weyer, on the west side of the Vosges, should a threat develop on the corps' exposed northern flank.

Advancing in two separate columns, GTD crossed the Sarre river and pressed on meeting only weak German defences on the way. By late afternoon on the 21st its northern column, Task Force Rouvillois, had reached La Petite-Pierre, in the heart of the Vosges, and its southern arm, Task Force Quilichini, headed east until it was halted by well-defended anti-tank obstacles across the N4 in front of Phalsbourg.

South of Sarrebourg, GTL's northern column, Task Force Minjonnet, crossed the Sarre Rouge river on the 20th and drove eastward to Voyer, overrunning artillery positions of the 553. Volksgrenadier-Division and taking 200 prisoners. Farther south, Task Force Massu spent much of the morning of the 20th outflanking and breaking through the last defences of the 553. Volksgrenadier-Division along the Sarre Blanche river and finally captured Saint-Quirin in the afternoon. Commandant Jacques Massu then sent his armour up the twisting mountain roads in the direction of the Valsberg pass.

Prisoners, mostly from artillery and service units, began to create a problem, especially for GTL's task forces south of Saverne, and XV Corps directed the 79th Division to attach two rifle companies to the 2ème Division Blindée to help handle the increasing number of surrendering Germans.

Knowing that his weak remaining forces were unable to interdict the Dabo road, Generalmajor Hans Bruhn, the commander of the 553. Volksgrenadier-Division, assembled

The 2ème Division Blindée continued to dash eastward on November 23 and Task Force Rouvillois entered Strasbourg at 1030 hours that morning. With the caption giving no clue whatsoever, Jean Paul faced a real challenge to find where this picture had been taken in the very large city of Strasbourg. (ECPAD)

He finally tracked down the location: the Allée David Goldschmidt in the Stockfeld part of the city. This is a southern quarter of Strasbourg, which means that the wartime picture was not taken during the initial advance into the city by Task Force Rouvillois, but later in the battle.

Left: **With large official buildings in the background, this picture of a lorry burning after a hit from a German shell promised to be easier to find. It was probably taken the following day, November 24, when the Germans had recovered from their surprise and started to retaliate from across the Rhine. (US Army)** *Right:* **Strasbourg, Place de la République, today.**

The sudden appearance of French armour in Strasbourg had caught the Germans completely off guard and hundreds of them were taken prisoner in the city. (ECPAD)

Generalmajor Franz Vaterrodt (left), commanding general of the Wehrmacht forces in the Strasbourg area, sheltered in Fort Ney until November 25 when he finally surrendered with the 800 men that were with him. He is seen here later that day, with Major R. H. McIntire (centre) of the US Seventh Army Headquarters, after he had been taken to Strasbourg. (US Army)

1,800 men, a few light artillery pieces and some vehicles in an area just north of Voyer late on the 20th. Aided by a heavy downpour, the group passed by several Allied outposts in the night and reached Arzviller before dawn on the 21st. Another force of some 300 men joined them in the morning, and with these two groups and miscellaneous other troops already in the area Bruhn began to organise the defences of the Saverne gap proper, attempting to tie in his forces with the existing defences at Phalsbourg.

Starting out at dawn on the 21st, Task Force Massu reached the Valsberg pass by noon in spite of some resistance. Moving as fast as possible down the steep slopes of the eastern Vosges, the point units broke through to the Alsatian plains and Massu then turned north, heading for Saverne as planned. GTV, which followed behind, moved east, spreading out over the broad rolling terrain. Massu entered Saverne on the 22nd, capturing over 800 Germans, including Generalmajor Bruhn and some personnel of LXXXIX. Armeekorps headquarters.

General der Infanterie Gustav Hoehne, the new commander of the LXXXIX. Armeekorps (dissatisfied with his performance, Balck had replaced General Werner von Gilsa), had just arrived that morning and, reviewing the situation, had immediately pulled most of his corps headquarters out of the town. Upon learning of Bruhn's capture, he took over what elements of the latter's 553. Volksgrenadier-Division he could find and, during the night of November 22/23, led them and his remaining corps staff northward along back roads through the mountains. They successfully crossed the D9 to La Petite-Pierre, stealthily slipping through between echelons of Task Force Quilichini.

While GTL (Task Forces Massu and Minjonnet recombined) and Task Force Rouvillois of GTD cleaned out Saverne and its environs on the 22d, GTV secured more Alsatian towns and villages south and southeast of the city, meeting little German resistance. Later in the afternoon, Minjonnet moved north-west up the N4 from Saverne and by dusk, having overrun many westward-facing German defences, was about two kilometres short of Phalsbourg.

The advance of the XV Corps in the Saverne gap and that of the Third Army's XII Corps just west of it might open a gap between the 1. and 19. Armee and Ob. West took measures to reinforce the threatened sector. Von Rundstedt had already directed Heeresgruppe H, in the Netherlands, to send the 256. Volksgrenadier-Division to the 1. Armee and on the 21st, he directed the same Heeresgruppe H to send another formation, the 245. Infanterie-Division. The former was weak, in the process of rebuilding, and the second was worn out.

Left: **Following the fall of Strasbourg, the XV Corps bagged a total of 12,000 prisoners, including three generals. On November 24 or 25 these prisoners were put to work to dismantle the barricades and defence positions built in the city. (ECPAD)**
Right: **Place Kléber, which the Germans had renamed Karl-Roos-Platz in 1940, as it looks today.**

As the 2ème Division Blindée was occupying Strasbourg's city centre without too much difficulty on the 23rd, other units of the division rushed on eastwards to the Rhine. However, a few hundred metres short of the road and rail bridges over the river they ran into strong German defences backed by anti-tank weapons. These two Shermans of the 12ème Régiment de Cuirassiers, *Cherbourg* and *Meknes,* were stopped dead in their tracks. (ECPAD)

On November 22 von Rundstedt gave Heeresgruppe G a provisional corps headquarters, known as Höheres Kommando Vogesen, to consolidate defensive preparations in the Strasbourg area. The new headquarters was to establish a line from the Moder river south to Wasselonne, 12 kilometres south-east of Saverne. As soon as it arrived at Haguenau, about November 24, the 256. Volksgrenadier-Division was to pass under its control but until then the forces at the disposal of Höheres Kommando Vogesen were insignificant: Feldkommandantur 987 (the regional Wehrmacht occupation command based at Haguenau); the armed forces command of Strasbourg; the headquarters (only) of the 49. Infanterie-Division; about 600 men from two infantry battalions; and miscellaneous small units that had begun to move westward across the Rhine.

Von Rundstedt knew that only a strong counter-attack could prevent an Allied breakthrough and he pressed the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (OKW) to release the Panzer-Lehr-Division to him. Currently refitting in the rear, the Panzer-Lehr-Division had been earmarked for the Ardennes offensive and OKW was reluctant to authorise its commitment. Von Rundstedt finally succeeded in the afternoon of the 21st and the unit started south in the evening. However, OKW specified that it would have to return northward by November 28. Giving the Panzer-Lehr-Division to Heeresgruppe G, von Rundstedt directed Balck to commit it as a whole in a strong counter-attack deep into the northern flank of the XV Corps' penetration. Balck drew up plans accordingly and in addition directed Wiese to organise a task force to link up with the Panzer-Lehr-Division from the south in the vicinity of Hazelbourg. Obviously, Balck had yet failed to appreciate that both the 553. and the 708. Volksgrenadier-Divisions were by then falling apart.

Having assembled near Sarre-Union, later than planned and with only 30 to 40 tanks and two of its four panzergrenadier battalions, the Panzer-Lehr-Division started southwards in the late afternoon of November 23. It attacked in two columns, the eastern one with 20 to 25 Panther tanks moving south through Eywiller and the western one with 10 to 12 PzKpfw IVs moving parallel down to Baerendorf. During the night, the western Kampfgruppe reached Rauwiller, taking 200 prisoners from the US 44th Division, and the eastern force pushed the US 106th Cavalry out of Weyer and south to Schalbach. The Americans were quick to react and on the morning of the 24th, CCB of the 4th Armored Division (from XII Corps, Third Army) moved eastwards across the Sarre into the XV Corps zone. The lead troops soon ran into the exposed flank of the western German force and house-to-house and tank-versus-tank fighting ensued in and near Baerendorf.

Left: **By-passed by a new road leading to the new Rhine bridge — the Pont d'Europe — the Route du Rhin is now a quiet back street. Note how six of the trees lining the street have survived all these 60 years. In the background the Sainte Jeanne d'Arc Church also remains unchanged and the large building at left is still a school.** *Right:* **A Sherman tank today stands nearby as a memorial to Sergent-Chef Albert Zimmer, the commander of the *Cherbourg,* who was killed here when his tank was hit.**

Left: **The liberation of Alsace, a French province that had been annexed by the Third Reich in 1940, was of great significance to the French and particularly to Général Leclerc, the commander of the 2ème Division Blindée. In March 1941, when he had just forced the Italian garrison of the Kufra oasis in Libya to surrender, then-Colonel Leclerc had promised not to cease fighting before the tricolour flag fly again over Strasbourg and Metz. This small parade held on Place Kléber on November 26, 1944 was to celebrate the fulfilment of that promise. (ECPAD)** *Right:* **A perfect comparison on Place Kléber.**

Just before dawn on the 25th, the western Kampfgruppe renewed its attack, hitting the CCB elements at Baerendorf and re-occupying part of Rauwiller. Confused fighting continued for several hours until the Germans finally fell back to the north and north-east. Meanwhile, the eastern Kampfgruppe had overrun part of the 2nd Battalion, 114th Infantry, of the 44th Division near Schalbach. However, strong American artillery fire turned back their efforts to advance further south. For all practical purposes, by the afternoon of the 25th the Panzer-Lehr-Division's offensive had been brought to a halt. Von Rundstedt called off the operation in the evening and the division withdrew northwards to temporary defensive lines between the Sarre river and Eywiller. With it, any danger to the XV Corps flank disappeared.

Strasbourg was a VI Corps objective but while that corps was still fighting its way through the Vosges, the city had come within easy reach of XV Corps and on the 21st, Patch ordered Haislip to 'attack Strasbourg, employing armoured elements to assist the VI Corps in the capture of the city.' After that Haislip was to push north along the Rhine to the Soufflenheim-Rastatt area, taking advantage of any opportunity to force a crossing. The VI Corps was to prepare to cross the Rhine in its sector or, more likely, to exploit through a XV Corps bridgehead. Consequently, on the morning of the 22nd, Haislip ordered the 2ème Division Blindée to strike for Strasbourg and secure the city if it reached the area before the VI Corps.

On annexation, Alsace-Lorraine became the German Gau of Elsass-Lothringen and Germanic names were quickly given to all the streets and squares in these provinces. In Strasbourg, Place Kléber became Karl-Roos-Platz (Karl Roos had been executed by the French in February 1940 as a German spy), Place Broglie was turned into Adolf-Hitler-Platz, and the Rue du 22 Novembre (the day when the French troops reached Strasbourg in 1918) was renamed Strasse des 19. Juni, after the day the Germans had entered the city in 1940. When Alsace was liberated, the removal of the Nazi signs became an urgent necessity. (ECPAD)

The official US Army historians, Clarke and Smith, described the capture of Strasbourg thus: 'Starting out about 0715 on November 23, GTL rolled rapidly eastward across the Alsatian plains with Task Force Rouvillois on the north and Task Force Massu to the south. Overrunning German outposts and minor garrisons in the small Alsatian farming towns, TF Rouvillois achieved complete surprise and entered Strasbourg at 1030 that morning. TF Massu, which was to have driven into the city from the north-west, encountered stronger German opposition, but ultimately followed shortly thereafter. Later, about 1300 that afternoon, GTV also began pouring into Strasbourg from the west, bringing with it a battalion of the 313th Infantry, 79th Division.

'Meanwhile, amid almost incredible scenes of German surprise and consternation, Rouvillois' armour wheeled through the streets of Strasbourg to the Rhine, seizing intact bridges over the canal-like watercourses in the eastern section of the city. Ahead lay the highway and railway bridges over the Rhine to the German town of Kehl scarcely 650 metres short of the river. However, the French armour ran into strongly manned German defences in apartment houses and thick-walled bunkers, buttressed by anti-tank barriers and anti-tank weapons. Soon German artillery and mortars emplaced east of the Rhine began laying down accurate fire that forced Rouvillois' troops and vehicles to pull back and seek cover. The local German commanders had apparently ignored any instructions to outpost the Alsatian plains and instead had concentrated on defending certain sections of the city, including the vital Kehl bridges.

'Throughout November 23 and 24 TF Rouvillois made several attempts to reduce the German bridgehead, but the result was a stalemate. Lacking strength for an all-out assault in the urban area, the infantry-poor French armoured units had to be content with isolating the German enclave from the rest of the city. The Germans, in turn, made no move to reinforce or enlarge the bridgehead and, pending orders to destroy the bridges, held on mainly to aid the escape of German troops and civilians able to infiltrate through the French vehicles to safety. In the meantime, TF Massu and GTV mopped up isolated pockets of resistance, took hundreds of German troops prisoner and began rounding up German civilians for internment.'

The November offensive of the 6th Army Group had crushed the 19. Armee in a giant pincer: while in the south the 1ère Armée had gained control of the Belfort gap and reached the Rhine, in the north the Seventh Army had crossed the Vosges and taken Strasbourg. In doing so, the Allied armies

Eisenhower's decision on November 24 to turn the 6th Army Group's main effort north required a major regrouping of the Seventh Army and it was not before November 27 that the VI Corps finally moved off southwards with plans to clear the area from the Vosges mountains to the Rhine. Here, elements of the 2ème Division Blindée move southwards through the town of Entzheim, ten kilometres south-west of Strasbourg, on the 27th. (ECPAD)

The vehicles may have moved on but otherwise time has stood still at Entzheim.

Left: **Civilians cheer as tanks of the 2ème Division Blindée drive past their house in Entzheim. Jean Paul discovered that most people in this picture belonged to one and the same family, the Manns. L-R: unknown, Jacques, Charles, Caroline and Jean-Jacques Mann. (ECPAD)** *Right:* **The Route de Strasbourg at Entzheim has remained remarkably unchanged.**

Left: **While the 2ème Division Blindée and elements of the US 14th Armored Division started to push south, the US 103rd Division came down the Vosges from the west. This M7 Gun Motor Carriage — a 105mm howitzer mounted on the chassis of an M3 medium tank — of the artillery regiment of the 2ème Division Blindée was pictured as it entered the town of Obernai, 30 kilometres south-west of Strasbourg. (ECPAD)** *Right:* **Rue de Molsheim in Obernai today.**

had nearly destroyed six of 19. Armee's eight infantry divisions: the 553. and 708. Volksgrenadier-Divisions on the approaches to Saverne; the 716. Infanterie- and 16. Volksgrenadier-Divisions in the Vosges; and the 338. and 198. Infanterie-Divisions in the Belfort gap. To defend Alsace, General Wiese could count only on two divisions which remained in fair condition, the 269. and the 159. Infanterie-Divisions, that were holding the Vosges mountains west of Colmar, plus two more that were coming from the Netherlands and a collection of personnel and miscellaneous units of no value. Nevertheless, on November 24 and 27 Hitler approved directives which committed the 19. Armee to the defence of a vast bridgehead west of the Rhine, a bridgehead that soon became known in the Allied camp as the Colmar Pocket.

Elated by their successful advance to Strasbourg and the Rhine and convinced that the 19. Armee would soon withdraw across the river, 6th Army Group and Seventh Army planners were speeding preparations for a Rhine crossing in the Rastatt area. Devers and Patch had previously envisaged a crossing sometime between December 10 and 20, but their thoughts now turned to the first week of December. A northward exploitation by VI Corps through a XV Corps bridgehead would begin no later than the second week of the month. Specialised river-crossing units had been alerted to move to forward assembly areas and by the afternoon of the 24th, amphibious DUKW companies were rolling toward the Rhine.

That day, November 24, Eisenhower and Bradley began a tour of the Allied southern front. They first visited Patton at Nancy and found Third Army nearly halted. The weather was awful, the ground had turned into a sea of mud, and traffic was breaking up the roads. Patton urged them that either a portion of his front be assigned to the 6th Army Group or the XV Corps be returned to Third Army control, preferably the latter. Bradley said he favoured narrowing the Third Army front but Eisenhower was noncommittal though he seemed to have also made up his mind. Eisenhower and Bradley next travelled to Lunéville where they picked up Devers and Patch before proceeding with them to Haislip's XV Corps headquarters at Sarrebourg and then to Brooks' VI Corps command post at Saint-Dié.

As described by Clarke and Smith in *Riviera to the Rhine*: 'Within both headquarters Eisenhower and Bradley found the corps staffs busily planning to push their forces farther east, seize bridgeheads over the Rhine and cross into Germany itself. Eisenhower, however, quickly ended these preparations. Concerned about Patton's flagging offensive,

Sherman tanks from Combat Command A of the 14th Armored Division pass through Obernai on their way to Barr, ten kilometres further south. The lead units of this green division entered that town on the 28th, only to find themselves trapped in its narrow streets, losing 18 tanks in the process. (ECPAD)

Some patches of snow remaining on the roofs did their best to give our comparisons the desired winter atmosphere. This street leading to the town hall in the centre of the Obernai is now the Rue du Général Giraud.

he wanted the Seventh Army's axis of attack reoriented from the east to the north, through the Low Vosges and against the German 1. Armee's southern flank. At Haislip's command post, he even issued verbal orders directing the XV Corps to halt all preparations for a Rhine crossing, change direction immediately and advance generally northward astride the Vosges mountains in close support of the Third Army. Supporting Patton's advance into the Saar basin was to have first priority.

'Somewhat stunned by the new orders, Devers was determined to challenge them. Returning to the 6th Army Group headquarters at the Héritage Hotel in Vittel that evening, the three principal American ground commanders had a late formal dinner and then retired to Devers' private office to talk over the entire matter. The ensuing discussion lasted until the early hours of the following day and saw a heated argument between Eisenhower, Bradley and Devers. Eisenhower continued to insist that Devers halt all preparations for a Rhine crossing and turn the Seventh Army north to assist Patton's forces as quickly as possible. Although current SHAEF directives had provided for the opportunistic seizure of bridgeheads across the Rhine during the November offensive by all participants, the Supreme Commander now ruled firmly against a Seventh Army crossing. Furthermore, he proposed transferring two divisions from the 6th Army Group to Bradley's 12th Army Group and extending the boundary of Haislip's XV Corps to the north-west. Devers objected bitterly to each of these measures, arguing that the Seventh Army was the force that ought to be strengthened and not the Third. If assisting Patton was the primary objective then, he contended, a Seventh Army Rhine crossing at Rastatt followed by a drive north to envelop the Saar basin was the best solution. On this point, however, Bradley strongly disagreed: attempting to force the Rhine against the prepared defensive positions of the West Wall was foolhardy and would only lead to failure. Exasperated, Devers countered that the Germans currently had few if any troops in front of the Seventh Army and that Patch's reconnaissance patrols across the Rhine had found the defences there completely unmanned. Eisenhower was unmoved. He instructed Devers to use whatever strength was necessary to clean up the area between the Vosges and the Rhine but to turn the Seventh Army north as quickly as possible, attacking west and east of the Low Vosges. There would be no Rhine crossing.'

Eisenhower reportedly came out of the Vittel conference 'mad as hell' over Devers' open criticism of his strategy. The following day he and Bradley concluded their visit in touring the French front before returning north via Vittel on the morning of the 26th. Devers, who openly wondered if he was 'a member of the same team', persisted in his opinion that Eisenhower's decision was a major error and that he ought to have instead reinforced the successful Seventh Army breakthrough to the Rhine. Also, while he agreed that the Third and Seventh Armies working together could easily breach the defences of the Saar, Devers judged that Third Army logically belonged in his own 6th Army Group.

The question remains what might have come out of a crossing of the Rhine in the south in late November or early December 1944. As Brigadier General Garrison H. Davidson, who in 1944 was the Seventh Army Chief Engineer, wrote 30 years after the event: 'I have often wondered what might have happened had [Eisenhower] had the audacity to take a calculated risk as General Patton would have instead of playing it safe. Perhaps success would have eliminated any possibility of the Battle of the Bulge; 40,000 casualties there could have been avoided and the war shortened by a number of months at the saving of other thousands of lives.' The Seventh Army, Davidson concluded, had 'provided [Eisenhower] with an opportunity to depart from his broad front strategy . . . and make a lightning thrust across the Rhine in the Strasbourg-Rastatt area.'

The Seventh Army would get no opportunity to exploit the hard-won successes of the Saverne gap and Strasbourg. On November 24, Eisenhower directed the army to change direction immediately and advance northward astride the Vosges mountains in close support of the US Third Army. The Supreme Commander believed that it was far more important to support Third Army's advance toward the Saar region than to cross the Rhine. Devers and his 6th Army Group staff had no other option than to swallow their disappointment and obey Eisenhower's questionable decision. By December 5, they had turned the Seventh Army north as ordered by SHAEF. The Germans were left in possession of a large bridgehead west of the Rhine — soon to become known in the Allied camp as the Colmar pocket — and it quickly became apparent that the German 19. Armee, rather than simply withdraw across the river, would hold in place. Hitler had decided not to give up the annexed province of Alsace and, taking advantage of the delays caused by the reshuffle within 6th Army Group, the Germans were able to reorganise and strengthen their bridgehead considerably. The 19. Armee would hang on to it for over two more months and the Alsatian plains would not be finally cleared until February 9, 1945. Almost as a symbol for the great opportunity lost in Alsace, a French soldier stands guard at the western end of the blown road bridge over the Rhine at Strasbourg. (ECPAD)

In March 2003, Dutch researchers Arie-Jan van Hees and Frans Ammerlaan discovered a unique relic left over from the battle of Arnhem: the main part of the fuselage of the one of the tug aircraft of No. 38 Group used in the operation. The aircraft in question, Stirling LK545 of No. 299 Squadron, had been shot down on September 21, 1944, while on a re-supply mission to the besieged airborne perimeter at Oosterbeek. After the liberation, the fuselage had been cut from the wreck and was employed as a pigsty for over 50 years, tucked away in a farm backyard at the village of Beuningen in the Netherlands. Here Frans Ammerlaan (left) and Arie-Jan van Hees (right) proudly pose with their historic find.

RECOVERY OF AN ARNHEM STIRLING

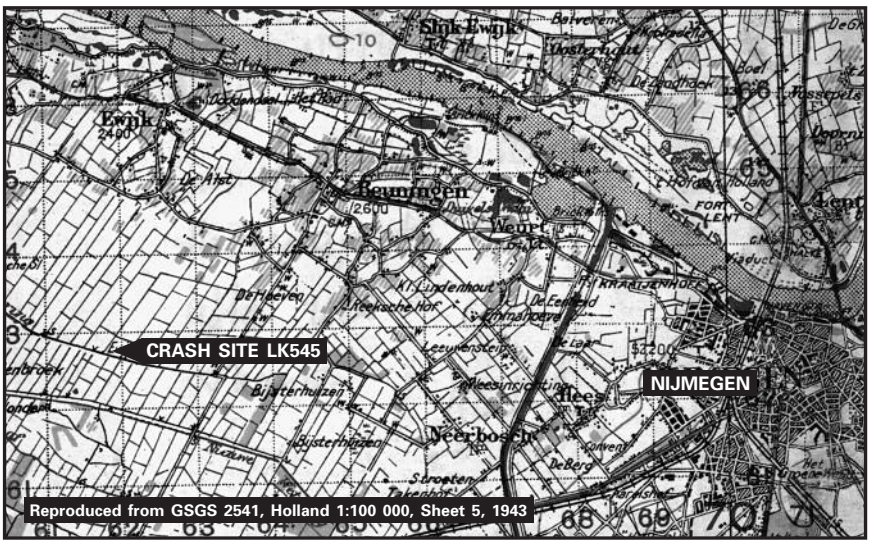
By Arie-Jan van Hees and Frans Ammerlaan

In September 2000, Dutch historian Arie-Jan van Hees published his book *Tugs and Gliders to Arnhem*, a comprehensive account of the British and Polish glider missions to Arnhem during Operation 'Market-Garden' in September 1944. The success of this publication prompted him to start on a companion volume, to be titled *Green On*, about the RAF re-supply flights to Arnhem.

In February 2003, *De Gelderlander*, the regional newspaper in the Arnhem-Nijmegen region, published an article about Van Hees's research and his forthcoming book. The feature included a map showing the location of 91 crash sites of aircraft from the 'Market-Garden' operation. The map had been provided by Frans Ammerlaan, a friend of Van Hees and (together with webmaster Andries Hoekstra) one of the people behind the prime website on the Arnhem battle (*www.marketgarden.com*).

Two weeks later, Van Hees received an E-mail from a man who introduced himself as Erik Peelen from Beuningen, a village just west of Nijmegen. He urged Van Hees to come and visit him, as he might have something of interest in his back garden. In a further phone call, Peelen explained that he had read the newspaper article and that one of the crash locations marked on the map was situated near where he was living. He said that he thought that maybe he had the remains of one of the crashed aircraft in his backyard. He described the thing as having 'oval windows' which made Van Hees's heart miss a beat as this meant it could only be a Short Stirling.

Visiting the Peelen house at 14 Hommelstraat in Beuningen a few days later, Van Hees and Ammerlaan were indeed confronted with a truly spectacular discovery: an intact, five-metre-long part of the fuselage of a Short Stirling Mark IV. The squadron code, painted in red on the fuselage, was still vaguely visible — 5G — enabling Van Hees and Ammerlaan to easily identify it as an aircraft of No. 299 Squadron of No. 38 Group, RAF, one of the units engaged in supporting the Arnhem battle.



The aircraft crash-landed south of the village of Ewijk and south-west of Beuningen.

Flight Lieutenant Reginald Turner, the pilot of LK545. After three glider-tow missions to Arnhem, the September 21 sortie was his first re-supply flight. (ABRG)

Further study of the squadron records soon revealed the identity of the aircraft. Of the five Stirlings lost by the squadron during 'Market-Garden', only one — LK545 — had been lost in the general area where the fuselage part had turned up. The squadron's Operations Record Book gave a map reference for its crash site (062063E) which put it near the village of Ewijk, just two kilometres west of Beuningen. The ORB also gave a locality — Noordelyhe — which initially puzzled Van Hees as he could find no locality or farm of that name anywhere. The riddle was solved when he happened to mention it to one of the locals who was quick to explain that 'Noordelei' was an old local expression for 'north of the lei', a lei being a term for an irrigation canal. Locals confirmed that the Stirling that had crashed near Ewijk had indeed come down close to one such canal, the Grote Wetering. One of its wings had in fact stuck out over the water and local children had used it as a diving board.

Its identity now established, Van Hees and Ammerlaan realised they had a priceless discovery in their hands. This was not just a relic of a rare aircraft, but a unique relic from a historic battle.

The story of Stirling LK545's last mission is quickly told. On September 21, 1944 — the fourth day of the ill-fated airborne operation — 11 Stirlings of No. 299 Squadron took off from RAF Keevil to take part in a re-supply drop by 117 aircraft to the beleaguered troops of the British 1st Airborne Division fighting for survival in the Oosterbeek perimeter in Holland. One of them was Stirling LK545 (5G-T) piloted by Flight Lieutenant Reginald Turner, the other crew members being Warrant Officer B. H. Harvey (flight engineer), Flight Sergeant J. E. Price (navigator), Flight Sergeant W. Moss (air gunner/wireless operator), Flying Officer J. E. Sutton (tail gunner) and Flight Sergeant F. H. Sedgwick (bomb aimer). In addition the aircraft carried two air despatchers of the 253rd Airborne Composite Company, RASC: Driver J. Brackman and Corporal C. B. Sproston. Their mission was to drop 24 containers and four panniers on a small drop zone in front of 1st Airborne's Divisional Headquarters at the Hotel Hartenstein in Oosterbeek.

The journey was quiet until they crossed the Rhine over the DZ when a very heavy light and medium flak concentration opened up, followed by enemy fighters who were waiting outside the DZ area to catch aircraft which dodged to get in. The re-supply aircraft had no fighter cover, so enemy aircraft were able to attack in numbers until air cover arrived later and the enemy dispersed.

While over the DZ, as it was turning away to port, LK545 was badly hit by 20mm flak and the rear turret caught fire, forcing the tail gunner, Flying Officer Sutton, to bail out, after attempts had been made to get him out. Flight Lieutenant Turner continued course, but the fire got out of control, so he chose a position in open country near friendly lines just west of Nijmegen and crash-landed the aircraft. No one was hurt and the crew were able to destroy all the secret equipment aboard. Dutch peasants turned up and welcomed the crew effusively. They took them to a house, fed them and contacted the local underground who put a guard on the aircraft. A Dutch policeman in a car picked up the crew and brought them to British XXX Corps Main HQ near Nijmegen where they remained the night.

Next morning, September 22, XXX Corps gave them a three-ton lorry with a driver and armed escort to go to Eindhoven together with various other RAF and Army Airborne personnel, as a first step in their journey back to the UK. However, things would turn out a little different. Driving south between Uden

It was farmer Bernard Zwartjes who cut the fuselage from the wreck in 1944. Here his daughter Nellie (left) sits beside it with her cousin Beppie van Bergen.

and Veghel, they were halted by an MP who said only priority vehicles could go through Veghel as the situation there was not good. Civilians then warned them that some German tanks were approaching from about a mile to the east. These tanks belonged to Panzerbrigade 107 which was trying to cut the Eindhoven—Nijmegen road, the main supply artery for XXX Corps.

As considerable traffic had passed towards Veghel, Turner decided to go through with his lorry. On the way, near the hamlet of Mariaheide, they were met by an Army officer with three Bofors guns belonging to the 123rd Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, RA, who wanted to go forward to prepare an ambush for the enemy. Turner warned him about the panzers coming up behind but the officer went on and ran straight into them. He returned to Turner's party with one Bofors trailing behind his Jeep, having lost the other two guns and all his ammunition trucks, and with about 25 of his men on the Jeep and on foot.

He asked Turner to help and advise him, so they all returned to Mariaheide where the Army officer set up a gun position by the road. Turner took charge of his spare troops,

Above: **Theo van Bergen, Zwartjes' father-in-law, enjoying the sun beside the pigsty in 1974.** *Right:* **As the years went by, the fuselage gradually disappeared under a thick growth of weeds and ivy. (N. van Vliet)**

spacing them out to observe an all-round defence, and sending Corporal Sproston as a spotter to the church steeple.

The Germans soon opened up with machine guns to which the British replied with theirs and two rounds of Bofors with no effect. At this point, Warrant Officer Harvey and Driver Brackman from Turner's crew and three others from the lorry party decided to evade on their own and left the group, going into a house in the village.

Warned by civilians and by Corporal Sproston in the church tower that enemy tanks were coming up on their left flank from the north-east, the Army officer said he was going back into Veghel with the Jeep, the Bofors and one gun crew, and asked Turner to take his surplus men with him in the lorry. On the way, Turner's lorry was ambushed by German machine guns which hit the vehicle and turned it over into a ditch. All the men fell in a heap on top of each other, but Turner shouted to them to get out into the ditch and not forget their weapons. Four men were killed and eight injured in the incident. Crushed in the upheaval, Turner himself had temporarily lost the use of his limbs and was forced to stay in the upturned lorry with Corporal Sproston.

The men were demoralised and bunched up in the ditch, so Turner shouted an order for them to open fire and take up some position. German snipers had the position covered and whenever Turner tried to get away from the lorry they riddled it. After some exchange of fire, Turner, who by then had managed to jump clear of the lorry, saw one of his party put up a white handkerchief, which one German acknowledged. He shouted to take it down, but it was not until another party in the ditch who had not seen the flag opened up on the Germans that it did come down.

By then, ammunition was running low and, as they were not certain of the German sniper positions, they decided that everyone should keep low and quiet to prevent further casualties, after which the enemy ceased fire.

The Army sergeant in the party made a recce but was unable to contact anyone, so Turner decided to evacuate the men in small parties to a farmhouse in the evening. At the farm the wounded were bedded down and a guard roster set up. There was much going on outside and they could hear Germans about, so, as ammunition was now very short, Turner gave instructions that everyone was to keep quiet and their position to lay dormant. There was to be no firing whatsoever unless they were discovered and directly attacked.

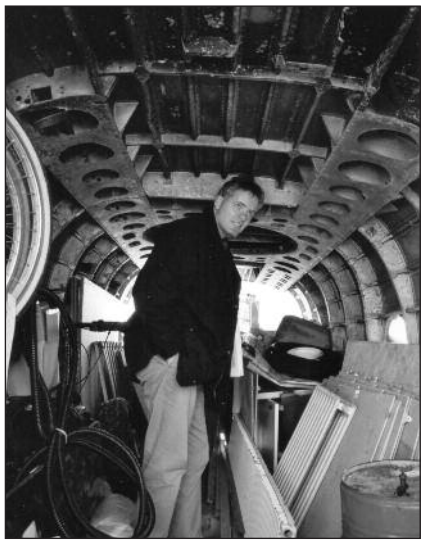
Cleared from its overgrowth by the new owner of the farm, the fuselage was then used as a storage shed.

Flight Sergeant Sedgwick of Turner's crew left on his own during the night. Turner and the other men remained in the house all night and next day, under heavy shell-fire. Their farm was the only house in the vicinity not hit and although heavy fighting went on all around, no one came to the farm or knew they were there. In the afternoon of September 23, after 28 hours of fighting their private battle, they were finally relieved by tanks of the Grenadier Guards who had come down from Nijmegen to re-open the road. Turner contacted a tank crew who sent a wireless message for ambulances. He left the Army troops in charge of their sergeant to take them to Veghel and took his RAF party — which still included Flight Sergeant Price, Flight Sergeant Moss and Corporal Sproston of his crew — back to XXX Corps HQ at Nijmegen where they remained overnight. Next day, September 24, they were sent to Brussels and from there were flown back to the UK.

By then, Warrant Officer Harvey and Driver Brackman had already reached the UK. As Harvey reported in his evasion report: 'A tank opened fire on the lorry and we took to the ditch. We remained in the ditch for 15 minutes but as the tank got a bit close we decided to make for a house. In the general confusion I lost sight of the rest of the crew. When the tank concentrated its fire on the house, Driver Brackman, myself and one other man made for another ditch further away from the tank. After proceeding from ditch to ditch for three hours we met an American Airborne patrol with four jeeps. They took us into Veghel and here we remained until 1400 hours on Saturday, September 23, when an Army officer gave us a lift into Brussels. We then went from Brussels into Northolt in a DC3.'

Two of the crew did not make it back. Flying Officer Sutton, who had been forced to bail out from the aircraft over enemy territory, was soon taken prisoner by the Germans. Flight Sergeant Sedgwick, who had tried to escape from Mariaheide on his own, was captured as well and ended up in Stalag Luft VII at Bankau.

Turner was awarded the Military Cross for his actions at Mariaheide and Corporal Sproston a Military Medal — which was quite unusual, as air force personnel seldom win Army medals. (See *Operation 'Market-Garden' Then and Now*, page 542.)



Arie-Jan inspecting the inside of LK545, a Mark IV type of Stirling built specifically for glider-tug and re-supply service.

A reminder of the fire that got out of control and prompted Flight Lieutenant Turner to crash-land the aircraft.

Traces of the aircraft's squadron code – 5G – are still vaguely visible. The bullet marks are from a post-war round of shot.

July 2003. The remains of LK545 is prepared to be transported to the museum of the Dutch Aircraft Examination Group.

Camera teams from Dutch television stand by as the section of fuselage is hauled onto a Dutch Army lorry.

So how had the fuselage of their aircraft survived all these years? Soon after the liberation of the southern Netherlands, local workers were contracted to break up aircraft wrecks for removal to scrap dealers. One of the workmen engaged to work on LK545 was a farmer named Bernard Zwartjes who lived at 14 Hommelstraat in Beuningen. Judging that he could make good use of the mid-part of the fuselage as a ready-made shed, he secured permission to keep it for himself. He cut off the hull right above the floor and transported it to his farm where he set it up on a low brick foundation, with brick walls to close the open sides and a door at one end. Thus fitted out, Zwartjes took the shed into use as a pigsty.

Many years passed. Zwartjes died in October 1989 and eventually the house was sold. By that time, the pigsty was no longer in use and the old fuselage had completely disappeared under a thick growth of weeds and ivy.

In 2001, Mr Peelen bought the house and the surrounding plot. When he first saw the garden he had noted the overgrown contraption in the back — 'a big green monster of weeds' — but had forgotten all about it. Wanting to improve his house first, he spent two years refurbishing it, paying little attention to the garden. It was only when he started on the garden that he discovered that the heap of weeds there was in fact hiding a strange kind of shed. His first impression was that it was some old type of American caravan. Clearing away the overgrowth, Mr Peelen took it into use as a storage shed. That is until he contacted Van Hees and Ammerlaan.

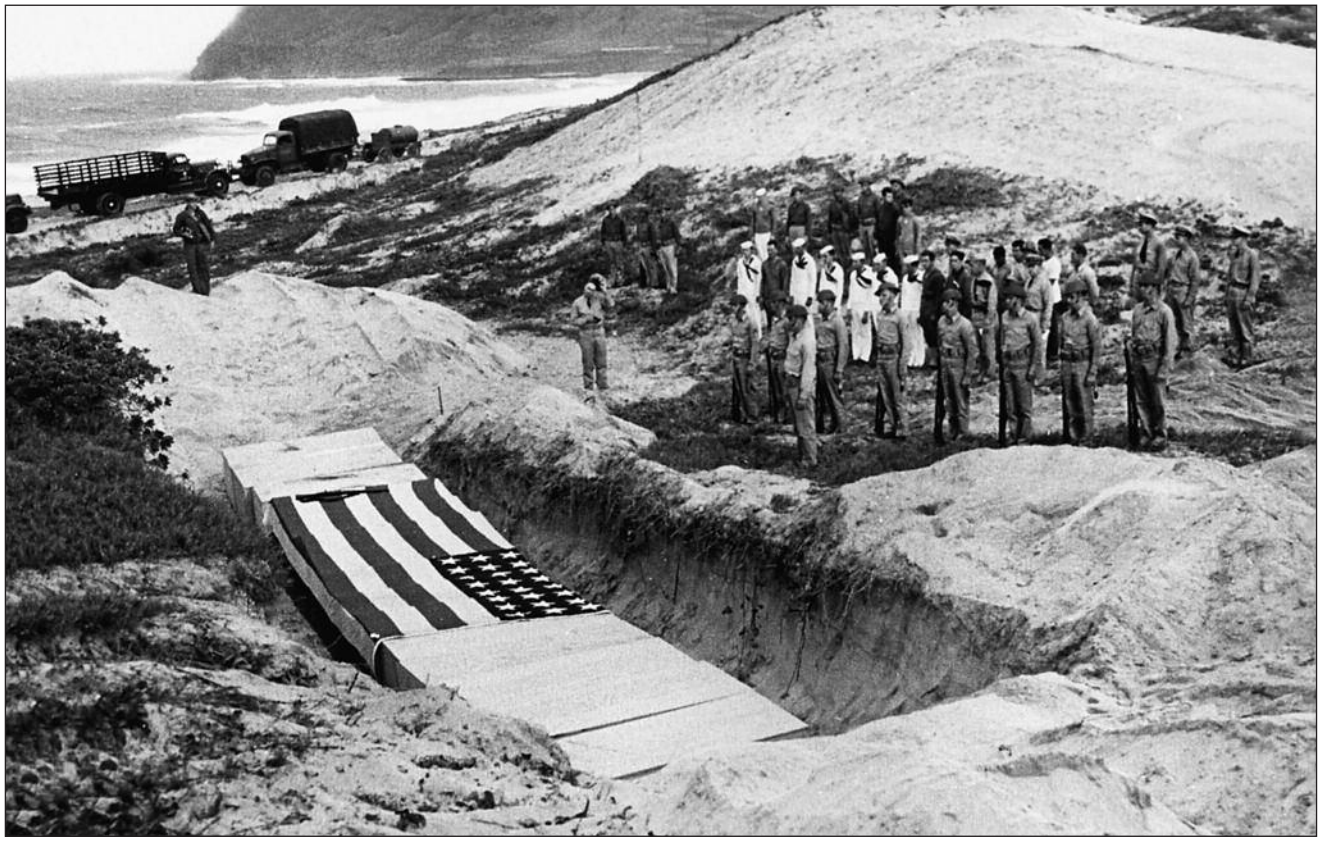
Now that it had been recognised as a unique relic from a historic battle, it was clear that some effort had to be made to preserve it. Van Hees and Ammerlaan contacted the Dutch Aircraft Examination Group (DAEG) who have a museum at the former Luftwaffe airfield of Deelen, north of Arnhem, and who already own various items connected with the Arnhem battle. They were the people who investigated the crash site of Dakota KG374 of Flight Lieutenant David Lord VC (see *After the Battle* No. 96) and excavated the German 7.5cm flak gun from the polder land across the Rhine from Arnhem (see *Operation 'Market-Garden' Then and Now*, page 411).

The DAEG showed an immediate interest in obtaining the Stirling fuselage for their museum. Negotiations with Mr Peelen were soon successfully concluded, the agreement being that the DAEG would get the fuselage in return for financing a replacement shed. And so, on July 10, 2003, a Dutch Army truck collected the fuselage from Mr Peelen's house and delivered it to the DAEG Museum at Deelen.

Arrival at the museum on Deelen airfield. The Stirling Aircraft Association has confirmed that this is the largest single piece of a Stirling surviving anywhere in the world.

A fitting finale to the story occurred on September 4, 2003, when Muriel Turner, the widow of the pilot (from his second marriage), and two of his children, daughter Gay McWhinnie-Turner (who was seven in 1944) and son Richard Turner (just a baby in 1944), visited the Deelen museum to see the remains of LK545.

Muriel Turner, widow of the pilot (centre), and two of his children, Gay (second from right) and Richard (right), proudly pose with the fuselage during their visit to the museum in September 2003. Richard's wife Alison stands on the left. (DAEG)



Of all the casualties suffered by the United States Armed Forces in World War II, 72,751 are listed as missing (although the precise number varies according to the categories included and criteria used). At the same time, the US Army during and after the war buried 10,015 unknown dead in 8,299 graves around the world. These unknowns are actually personnel missing in action. Any number of them that could be identified would lower the number of missing accordingly. Ted Darcy of Fall River, Massachusetts, and Ray Emory of Honolulu, Hawaii, have worked on the subject of American missing for 14 years. Both are retired servicemen, veterans from two different wars. Ray served in the US Navy and was at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, manning a .50-calibre machine gun on the decks of the USS *Honolulu* against the Japanese attackers, and has spent most of life cataloguing the Pearl Harbor victims. Ted served in the Marine Corps, saw action in Vietnam and went on to retire from the Corps in 1989. He is now a research analyst with the WFI Research Group based in Fall River. In 1989 they decided to join forces in an effort to identify as many as possible of the unknown dead from World War II. Much of their work concentrates on the over 1,600 servicemen listed as missing after the Pearl Harbor attack. *Above:* **Casualties from the Japanese attack being buried in a temporary group grave in the dunes near Kaneohe Naval Air Station on Oahu Island, Hawaii.**

FINDING AMERICA'S MISSING

By Ted Darcy and Ray Emory

This report has taken 14 years to prepare. Not that we are slow, there was just a lot to learn and piece together. All of the experts on World War II casualties have long since retired and for the most part the government considers the matter closed. Even after all that time it only represents the beginnings in what is sure to be a long and arduous road. Any long journey begins with a single step so let this report be that first step.

Thousands of American families have waited far too long to have the remains of their loved ones returned to them. Even now, some 60 years after the fact, family members want to know what happened to their loved ones. For some this report will answer those long unanswered questions. For the others it may help them understand what remains to be done. We will continue our research in the years to come and with a lot of luck, funding and co-operation on the part of the US Army, solve all of the remaining cases.

Sixty years ago when the problem began there were no computers as we know them today. Thus, there is no database listing all of those missing from the Second World War. We had to build one from scratch. For that task we used two primary source documents that had been created by the government at the time: 'Rosters WW-II DEAD (All Services) World War II' compiled by the American Graves Registration Service(AGRS) and the 'Register of the American Battle Monument Commission' (ABMC).

The ABMC was created by Congress in 1923 as the federal agency responsible for honouring American Armed Forces. Although the Commission deals with several American conflicts, we are only concerned with the World War II era. To keep track of the individuals that are under their care, the Commission published a Register of names for all those who are interred on foreign soil, lost or buried at sea and those determined to be missing and declared dead in accordance with Public Law 368, 80th Congress. Since that time the register has been computerised and is the accepted standard for the World War II database used to this day.

The register is very good as far as what it was designed for but does have several problems. For members of the Army and Army Air Force the individual units are noted. For the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard only the branch of service is given. The register is only for members of the Armed Forces and as such does not include civilians lost due to association with the military or members of the Merchant Marine, which suffered terrible losses during World War II. The dates of death provided for the missing can be either the actual date of the loss or the date the member was declared dead. In most cases it is a year and a day after the loss but some cases are two or three years later. The register does not denote the difference between missing and those that were buried at sea and thus makes their missing totals very inaccurate on the high side. The register only lists the final burial information and makes no record of previous burials. Hundreds of names have been omitted from the register for a variety of reasons though most are administrative oversights, which are corrected when found. Finally, the register was never designed for total accounting of all war dead and missing.

The above mentioned problems severely limit the use of the American Battle Monuments Commission register as a tool for tracking the missing. It does have value when used in conjunction with other source data as we shall see later.

US SERVICEMEN KILLED OR MISSING IN ACTION, WORLD WAR II (extract)

NAME	RANK	SERIAL	BRANCH	HS	CODE	DOD	BURIALS	SHIP/STATION	UNIT/SQD	ENGAGEMENT/LOCATION	GROUP
AAB,HOWARD ELBERT	SEA1	6500414	2	OK	1	440718	6360/8400			SAIPAN	
AABERG,BERNIE O	PVT	37576340	1	MN	6	441025	6	PHILIPPINES	170th ENGR COMBAT BN	PHILIPPINES MANILA	
AABERG,CLARENCE A	2LT	0802686	11	ND	1	440225	1605/1601 D-1-49	RATTLESDEN	711th BS	GERMANY KAISERLAUTEN	447th BG
AACHTE,HENRY GERHARD	LTJG	155317	2	OK	1	441223	8730/8400			SOLOMONS GUADALCANAL	
AADLAND,PETER	CPL	31157172	1	MA	1	440826	3572/3505 A-15-22				99th INF BN
AAGEBERG,JAMES B	CAPT	0813104	11	IN	1	450121	1240/1201 C-1-39	RAYDON	390th FS		366th FG
AAKER,ARNOLD O	CPL	36250263	1	WI	1	440528	5260/5202 I-10-11		191st TANK BN		
AAKER,LAWRENCE K	PFC	37172798	1		1		6020/????				
AAKERHUS,KENNETH H	1LT	01297470	1	MN	1	450420	8076/0492 E-775		381st INF REGT		96th INF DIV
AAL,OLGER I	1LT	0762186	11	CA	1	440829	1260/1202 D-5-39		350th FS	BELGIUM HEELENBESCH	353rd FG
AALBU,ARNE G	TSGT	39171347	1		1		3547/????				
AALDERKS,JOHN A	SGT	37268089	1	MN	1	440524	5260/5202 D-13-18		7th INF		3rd DIV
AALTONEN,KULLERVO T	TSGT	13001692	11	MA	6	430807	6	CHABUA	6th TS	INDIA CHINDWIN VALLEY N END	1st TG
AAMODT,SIDNEY C	PFC	37322464	1	ND	1	450316	6020/6001 B-6-13		355th INF		89th DIV
AAMOLD,STANLEY C	SGT	39604734	1	MT	1	450218	7746/7701 F-14-85				640th TD BN
AANONSEN,ROBERT HERMAN JR	MOMM2	3768254	2	CA	1	440607	1605/9100	USS *TIDE*		FRANCE NORMANDY	
AARANT,LOYD LONG	HA1	8732009	2	MO	1	450311	5532/7500			IWO JIMA	5th MAR DIV
AARDEMA,CHARLES	SGT	37479001	1	IA	1	450512	7749/7221				
AARHAUS,DAVID LOUIS	SF2	3858016	2	WA	1	420506	7748/9700	USS *CANOPUS*		PHILIPPINES	
AARON,CARL J	PVT	34779685	1	SC	1		3586/4700				
AARON,CELESTINO	PVT	10303170	1	PI	6	420713	6	PHILIPPINES	45th INF REGT	PHILIPPINES MANILA	PI SCOUTS
AARON,FLOYD R	TSGT	38507332	11	AR	1	450413	1260/8700	NUTHAMPSTEAD	601st BS	GERMANY GARBECK	398th BG
AARON,GEORGE E	PFC	33776030	1	PA	1	441217	3547/3503 K-35-37		347th INF		87th DIV
AARON,HENRY	SSGT	32016099	1		1		6365/?300				
AARON,HUBERT	F2	3468621	2	AR	6	411207	6	USS *ARIZONA*		HI PEARL HARBOR	
AARON,JAMES L	PVT	14047056	1	TN	6	420716	6	PHILIPPINES	31st INF REGT	PHILIPPINES MANILA	PI DIV

Ted Darcy and Ray Emory use five different computer databases in their research. Each has separate functions and covers a variety of topics. Every field in all of the databases is searchable. The first is the WW II Dead/Missing database. Scheduled for completion in 2004, it will contain the name of every American serviceman lost during World War II. The extract reproduced here shows the first 25 names from the database. Most of the columns are self-explanatory, but a few need explanation. The Branch column is coded as follows: 1 - Army; 11 - Army Air Corps/Force; 2 - Navy; 3 - Marine Corps; 4 - Coast Guard; 5 - Merchant Marine; 6 - Civilian. The HS column indicates the individual's home state in the US. The Code column is actually the disposition code for each individual and ties directly to the Burials column. The codes are: 1 - In accordance with the wishes of the next of kin; 2 - Administrative decision; 3 - Buried at sea in accordance with the wishes of the next of kin; 4 - Buried at sea; 5 - Not to be disturbed in accordance with the wishes of the next of kin; 6 - Non-recoverable (missing); 7 - Case closed. The DOD column gives the date of death (year, month, day). The Burials column shows the individual's final two burials so that one knows were his remains are now and where they came from. The codes in this column are for the many military cemeteries around the world. For example: 2nd Lieutenant Clarence A. Aaberg was initially buried in the temporary US cemetery at Cambridge (1605) in England. After the war he was moved to the new permanent Cambridge Cemetery (1601) where he now lies in Plot D, Row 1, Grave 49.

The American Graves Registration Service carried out the final disposition of remains under the command of the US Army Quartermaster General. This included theater searches for the missing, identifying the unknowns throughout the world, recovering bodies from small widely scattered cemeteries and placing them in temporary ones until the next of kin made their wishes known. They handled the return of the dead to the United States and the interment of those that remained overseas in permanent cemeteries there. Anyone that has read in detail the accomplishments of this group has to be impressed. In my estimation they did an outstanding job in achieving their mission. They had to overcome a variety of obstacles to accomplish their task. The political pressure from the Truman Administration to return the war dead to US soil, shortages of trained personnel due to the rapid demobilisation of the Armed Forces after the war, and gathering the materials required to build the casket shipping containers to name but a few.

US SERVICEMEN MISSING FROM WORLD WAR II (extract)

NAME	RANK	SERIAL	BRANCH	HS	CODE	DOD	BURIALS	SHIP/STATION	UNIT/SQD	ENGAGEMENT/ LOCATION	GROUP
AABERG,BERNIE O	PVT	37576340	1	MN	6	441025	6	PHILIPPINES	170th ENGR COMBAT BN	PHILIPPINES MANILA	
AALTONEN,KULLERVO T	TSGT	13001692	11	MA	6	430807	6	CHABUA	6th TS	INDIA CHINDWIN VALLEY N END	1st TG
AARON,CELESTINO	PVT	10303170	1	PI	6	420713	6	PHILIPPINES	45th INF REGT	PHILIPPINES MANILA	PI SCOUTS
AARON,HUBERT	F2	3468621	2	AR	6	411207	6	USS *ARIZONA*		HI PEARL HARBOR	
AARON,JAMES L	PVT	14047056	1	TN	6	420716	6	PHILIPPINES	31st INF REGT	PHILIPPINES MANILA	PI DIV
AARON,JOHN D	STM1	8475408	2	LA	6	441203	6	USS *COOPER*		PHILIPPINES ORMAC BAY	
AARON,REID S	2LT	0389278	11	VA	6	450121	6	PHILIPPINES	48th MAT SQ	PHILIPPINES MANILA	5th ABG
AASVIK,INGVARD T	PVT	304819	3	NJ	6	421208	6	SOLOMONS		SOLOMONS GUADALCANAL	1st MAR DIV
ABABAT,ALFREDO R	CPL	6866315	1	PI	6	460315	6	PHILIPPINES	12th QM REGT	PHILIPPINES MANILA	PI SCOUTS
ABACAN,EUSTAQUID	TEC5	10301025	1	PI	6	420601	6	PHILIPPINES	252nd SIG CONS CO	PHILIPPINES MANILA	PI SCOUTS
ABACAN,MAMERTO	CPL	6866191	1	PI	6	450222	6	PHILIPPINES	12th MED REGT	PHILIPPINES MANILA	PI SCOUTS

The next database is an extrapolation from the main one and shows just those individuals that are missing. This sub-database is very easily produced by filtering out the Code 6 (non-recoverable/missing) cases from the main database.

US ARMY AIR CORPS AIRCRAFT LOST AT PEARL HARBOR ON DECEMBER 7, 1941

SERIAL #	TYPE	DATE	LOCATION	SQD	BRANCH	GROUP	STATION	PILOT	REMARKS
41-5209	P-40B	411207	HI,OA OFF BELLOWS FLD .75MI N	44th PS	USA	18th PG	BELLOWS FLD	BISHOP,SAMUEL W LT/SER	SHOT DOWN ON T/O;SWAM TO SHORE;
41-5208	P-40B	411207	HI,OA BELLOWS FLD	44th PS	USA	18th PG	BELLOWS FLD	WHITEMAN,GEORGE A LT/KIA	SHOT DOWN ON T/O;C+B
40-2049	B-17C	411207	HI,OA BELLOWS AAF AT	38th RS	USA	11th BG	FERRY	RICHARDS, LT/NONE	F/L DURING AIR RAID;SALVAGED;
	P-36A	411207	HI,OA KIPAPA GULCH	47th PS	USA	15th PG	WHEELER AAF	DAINS,JOHN 0-424923 2LT/KIA	SHOT DOWN BY FRIENDLY FIRE;
	P-36A	411207	HI MISSING	46th PS	USA	15th PG	WHEELER AAF	STERLING,GORDON H JR 411852 2LT/MIA	SHOT DOWN BY ENEMY A/C;VNTY KANEOHE;
40-2074	B-17C	411207	HI,OA HICKAM AAF AT	38th RS	USA	19th BG	FERRY	SWENSON, LT/NONE	DURING AIR RAID;
	P-40	411207	NY MONTEFIORE CEMETERY	58th PS	USA	33rd PG		RYBAK,JOSEPH S CAD/INJ	F/L;HIT CROWD;1EA KIA;5EA INJ ON GRD;

Two of the leading causes for personnel to be listed as missing are ships and aircraft. Whereas it was easy to include a ship's name right into the main database, it was more difficult to do so for aircraft, so Ted developed two separate databases, one for the Army/Air Forces and one for the Navy/Marine Corps/Coast Guard. Included in the Army aircraft database are all the 16,608 Missing Air Crew Reports (MACR) compiled by the Army during and after the war. Our example for Army aircraft is for the Pearl Harbor attack and lists all seven Army aircraft lost on December 7, 1941 that have one or more aircrew missing.

Shortly after the war the unit was redesignated as Mortuary Affairs, a title that it maintains to this day. As they dealt with a much broader spectrum than the American Battle Monuments Commission, their records are different. The Mortuary Affairs listing covers several areas but there are no dates of loss. There are also no unit designations, only branch of service. However it does include merchant marine and associated civilian personnel. It contains the name of all the dead and missing, and one of the following disposition codes for each member lost:

1. According to the next of kin.
2. Administrative decision.
3. Buried at sea at the request of the next of kin.
4. Buried at sea by administrative decision.
5. Not to be disturbed.
6. Non-Recoverable (Missing).
7. Case closed.

Additionally, information as to sex, race, religion and previous burials is also included in the listing. This listing is not in a computerised format but is available on microfiche from the Army.

The Army further kept a 293 File (Individual Deceased Personnel File) on every body they handled. They also maintain a file for each of the unknowns that could not be identified at that time. These files contain detailed information about the individual concerned and are for the most part very complete. The files are still under the control of the Army but are stored in the National Record Center in Suitland, Maryland.

Compiling a database for the missing from those two sources was costly and time-consuming. Now that it has been completed it is the best database available and our best tool for finding the missing.

Besides the two primary documents listed above we also incorporated other important documents prepared by the government at that time. The first in this set are the Missing Air Crew Reports (MACR). During October 1942, Headquarters, Army Air Forces (AAF) undertook a seven-month study of the methods used in World War I to account for airmen reported missing in action. It was determined that those methods were not adequate to World War II air war activities, and in May 1943 AAF recommended the adoption of a special form, the Missing Air Crew Report, to record the facts of the last known circumstances regarding missing air crews. Following the end of the war, the Missing Air Crew Reports were to be used to determine the final disposition for the missing air crewmen. The War Department approved the AAF recommendation on May 23, 1943.

Upon approval, the Adjutant General directed that within 48 hours of an official finding that an aircraft or any member of its crew was missing and had last been seen in combat or over enemy-held territory, a Missing Air Crew Report be prepared by the station from which the aircraft had departed. These forms were then sent to Headquarters, AAF, in small batches and numbered consecutively upon receipt there.

The Casualty Branch, Headquarters, AAF, served as a central collection point for Missing Air Crew Reports throughout the war but in late 1946 all MACR at AAF Headquarters were transferred to the Identification Branch of the Memorial Division, Office of the Quartermaster General. These forms were a valuable part of the Quartermaster Department's post-war program to identify missing American military personnel. Army Air Force units continued to prepare and submit MACR though 1947 and in January 1949 all of those post-war reports were turned over to the Memorial Division. Most of the reports of missing aircrew were prepared soon after aircraft were reported missing, but some were prepared after the war by both the Army Air Forces and the Office of the Quartermaster General for crashes that had occurred before the MACR form was placed in effect in May 1943.

The next source came from the War Department, Navy and Army Casualty Listings by State. All three agencies put out listings of the war dead in 1946. The formats for all three are different. The War Department and the Army list the individual by state and then by county. The Navy lists the individual by state and then gives the name and address of the next of kin. The Navy attempted to take it one step further be dividing the names into dead and missing categories. Here they failed miserably as it would be years before accurate information was obtained. Remember search and recovery operations were still being conducted worldwide at that time.

US NAVY AIRCRAFT LOST AT PEARL HARBOR ON DECEMBER 7, 1941

BUREAU No.	TYPE	DATE	LOCATION	SQD	BRANCH	SIDE No. /NAME	SHIP/STATION	PILOT/RANK/INJ	REMARKS	CREW1
2160	SBD-2	411207	HI,OA EWA BELT ROAD NR	VS-6	USN	6-S-3	USS *ENTERPRISE*	VOGT,JOHN HL JR 81778 ENS/KIA	96.3 + 73.8 MIL COORD;	PIERCE,SIDNEY 3601858 RM3C/KIA
2159	SBD-2	411207	HI,OA OFF	VS-6	USN		USS *ENTERPRISE*	WILLIS,WALTER M 84140 ENS/MIA	SHOT DOWN BY E/A;	DUCOLON,FRED J 3927455 COX/MIA
2181	SBD-2	411207	HI,OA OFF KAENA POINT 15MI NW	VS-6	USN	6-B-3	USS *ENTERPRISE*	GONZALEZ,MANUEL 81553 ENS/MIA	SHOT DOWN BY E/A;	KOZELEK,LEONARD J 3000834 RM3C/MIA
2158	SBD-2	411207	HI,OA EWA MCAS NR	VS-6	USN	6-S-9	USS *ENTERPRISE*	MCCARTHY,JOHN R 83216 ENS/BO/MINOR	SHOT DOWN BY E/A;	COHN,MITCHELL 4036798 ARM3C/MIA
4570	SBD-2	411207	HI,OA EWA MCAS W	VS-6	USN	6-S-4	USS *ENTERPRISE*	DICKINSON,CLARENCE E LT/BOOK		MILLER,WILLIAM C 2622413 RM1C/MIA
3935	F4F-3A	411207	HI,OA PEARL CITY PALM TREE LODGE	VF-6	USN	6-F-15	USS *ENTERPRISE*	MENGES,HERBERT H 83295 ENS/KIA	BY FRIENDLY FIRE;	
3906	F4F-3A	411207	HI,OA WHEELER FLD NR	VF-6	USN	6-F-1	USS *ENTERPRISE*	HEBEL,FRANCIS F 76099 LT/KIA	BY FRIENDLY FIRE;	
3938	F4F-3A	411207	HI,OA IN PEARL HARBOR	VF-6	USN	6-F-12	USS *ENTERPRISE*	ALLEN,ERIC JR 81275 LT/BO/KIA	BY FRIENDLY FIRE;	
4572	SBD-2	411207	HI,OA OFF HICKAM FLD RNWY	VS-6	USN	6-S-14	USS *ENTERPRISE*	DEACON,ET ENS/MINOR	AA HIT FRIENDLY FIRE FR FT WEAVER;	COSELETT,AUDREY G 3373082 ARM3C/MINOR
3909	F4F-3A	411207	HI,OA BARBERS POINT NR	VF-6	USN	6-F-4	USS *ENTERPRISE*	FLYNN,DAVID R ENS/BOOK	BY FRIENDLY FIRE;	
5285	OS2U-3	411207	HI,OA OFF BARBERS POINT 10MI W	VO-4	USN		USS *MARYLAND*	GINN,JAMES B 81333 LT/KIA	FLEW INTO WATER AT NIGHT;	ROBERTS,WILLIAM R RM2C/SER (F-457 N/L);

A similar database was built up for all Navy aircraft. Again, our example is for December 7, 1941, and lists all 11 aircraft lost on that date that had any crew members missing. Of note is Armourer 3rd Class Mitchell Cohn, backseater on an SBD-2 scout bomber of naval squadron VS-6 from the USS *Enterprise*, missing but presumed to be the buried with a group of 15 unknowns from Hickam Field that were transferred from Schofield Barracks Cemetery to Punchbowl National Cemetery.

IDENTIFICATION OF MISSING BODIES

BODY LOCATION	RX FROM	D OF D	HEIGHT	WEIGHT	EST AGE	SHOE SIZE	DENTAL RECORDS	PROBABLE ID
0492 C-258	4564 X-24	411207	68-71"	152	16-19		FFFXFFFX	HEMBREE,THOMAS
0492 A-68	4560 X-4	411207	69.25-73.5	UDT	24-26		XFFXFXFFFF	VANDERPOOL, PAYTON L JR

The fifth and last database is for the unknowns. For each individual that was lost during the war (dead, missing, etc) the US Army generated a so-called Individual Deceased Personnel File (IDPF) which contained all the details involving the loss, including the person's dental chart. For the remains that could not be identified the Army also created an IDPF but assigned an X-number instead of a name, based on where the body came from. In the table reproduced here, 4564 X-24 is the 24th unknown reviewed by the Army from the Navy plot at Nuuanu Cemetery (4564) on Oahu Island, Hawaii. That body is now located in the Punchbowl National Memorial Cemetery (0492), Section C, Grave 258. The rest of the information is from the records and autopsy done by the Army. The dental records in the database actually consist of 32 separate fields, one for each tooth, but in this example we have bunched them all in one field to save space (X – tooth extracted; F – tooth with filling). Just as it is possible to track known burials, Ted and Ray can track the unknown ones as well. Then by matching the dental records and other details of those that are missing against the vitals on the unknowns that are buried they can get a probable ID. In the two examples listed here, they were right: unknown 4564 X-24 proved to be Thomas Hembree, a missing casualty from the USS *Curtiss,* and 4560 X-4 turned out to be Payton L. Vanderpool, missing from the USS *Pennsylvania*.

These therefore are the main sources for information dealing with the war dead. No one source is complete and each has its shortcomings. So to accomplish our task, we first had to build our own database with the names of all missing from all services. This had to be done simply because there wasn't one in existence. As you can imagine it took awhile to complete. Actually we have had to build several supporting databases to accomplish our mission. Now that this stage has been completed we can provide the following numbers for the missing: US Army 16,669; US Army Air Force 20,746; US Navy 31,553; US Marine Corps 3,007; US Coast Guard 623; Civilian 875; Total 73,473.

The government's resident authority on the subject is the American Battle Monuments Commission. They show a total of 78,976 Missing for the World War II period. As mentioned previously that number includes those buried at sea. From our databases we found 6,225 service members were actually buried at sea. That would bring the total missing down to 72,751. Why is our figure over 700 names higher? Mostly administrative oversights during the preparation of the initial reports. Regardless of which figure you choose to believe, keep in mind that the actual number of missing is going to be lower.

Since the end of the war, MIAs have been recovered on a regular basis. Mostly from isolated aircraft crash sites but others such as the Marine Raiders lost on Makin Atoll in the Gilbert Islands (see *After the Battle* No. 108 and No. 119, page 39). How much lower is the actual count? We asked the Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii (CILHI) and they wouldn't or couldn't tell us so we are stuck with that figure for the time being.

So who is actually missing? As with everything else we do, we kept this simple. If you didn't bury them, they are missing. The government has developed a variety of buzz phrases over the years such as 'killed in action, body not recovered'; 'declared dead under public law', 'determined dead' and 'undetermined' to name a few. Then there are requirements to be listed as a casualty. Battle or non-battle, are the two main categories but the actual location is the biggest key. On the WW II rosters of dead, no stateside casualties are listed.

Who are the unknowns? To put it simply they are MIAs that the Army failed to identify at the time. Following World War II the US Army actually buried 10,015 unknowns in various cemeteries around the world. The greatest numbers are located in Manila, Philippine Islands and Honolulu, Hawaii. Strange that both are in the Pacific but remember Europe was first for everything.

The 1,606 Pearl Harbor missing are commemorated on the Honolulu Memorial in the US National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Punchbowl at Honolulu, Hawaii.

I hope that I have provided a good background description of the players involved and the problems that we have had to overcome. Let's move on to the case files as they make it much more interesting reading. Although World War II had been going on in Europe and Asia for several years, America did not enter the action until after the Pearl Harbor attack on December 7, 1941, so the WW II period for American record keeping purposes is December 7, 1941 to December 31, 1946 when the war officially ended by Presidential Proclamation 2714.

In the surprise and devastating attack unleashed by the Japanese on Hawaii (see *After the Battle* No. 38), 2,398 American lives were lost in the following categories: Civilian 48; US Army 16; US Army Air Corps 227; US Navy 1,998; US Marine Corps 109. These figures are for both the dead and missing during the attack. When the final accounting was finished, the totals for the missing were 1,606 in the following breakdown: Army 3; Army Air Corps 15; Marine Corps 66; Navy 1,522. Once you have these figures you can concentrate on individuals, which makes finding the missing considerably easier.

The three Army personnel missing were the following:

Sgt Warren D. Rasmussen	20920790
Cpl Clyde C. Brown	20920839
Sgt Henry C. Blackwell	20920836

They were lost while flying in two civilian aircraft off Ewa Beach, Oahu. They had the misfortune of running into the first Japanese attack wave as it approached Pearl Harbor and were shot down by enemy aircraft. Both aircraft crashed in the offshore waters and the bodies were never recovered. Thus they remain missing and probably always will.

The next group we reviewed was the Army Air Corps. They were:

Pvt Donald E. Bays	6948505
Pvt Frank C. Boswell	6334448
PFC Lee I. Clendenning	16021445
PFC John E. Cruthirds	6298043
PFC James J. Gleason	6947032
PFC William E. Hasenfuss Jr	6977347
PFC Olaf A. Johnson	16007617
Cpl Lester H. Libolt	6936136
SSgt John H. Mann	6906443
Pvt Herbert E. McLaughlin	16021346
Cpl Donald F. Meagher	6587289
PFC Willard C. Orr	6149312
2Lt Gordon H. Sterling Jr	0411852
Pvt Herman K. Tibbetts Jr	11029005
SSgt Walter J. Zuschlag	6975453

We started with Lieutenant Sterling. He was the only one not stationed at Hickam Field. He was lost at sea off Kaneohe during a dogfight with Japanese aircraft. He was seen to dive into the waters just off Kaneohe Bay. Neither his body nor his P-36 aircraft were ever recovered. Thus, he remains missing.

The other 14 individuals on the list were all stationed at Hickam Field that morning. All were listed as missing after the attack. At the time Hickam Field did not have a cemetery. Army dead on Oahu were buried in the Post Cemetery at Schofield Barracks. Records from that cemetery show that 14 unknown bodies were received from Hickam Field following the attack. We have tracked these 14 bodies to their temporary graves at Schofield Barracks and then to their permanent ones in the Punchbowl. They are presently buried in these 14 graves as unknowns: A-1, A-780, M-610, N-1349, N-1102, N-1485, N-822, N-1474, P-640, N-1360, N-1234, N-962, M-470 and M-1200.

Thomas Hembree *(left)*, from Kennewick, Washington, was only 17 years old at the time of the Pearl Harbor attack and had been in the Navy for only four months. Hembree was the first Pearl Harbor missing to be formally identified. *Right:* Presented with the results of Ray Emory's research, a team of the US Army Central Identification Laboratory on January 30, 2001 exhumed Grave C-258 in the National Memorial Cemetery that was believed to contain the remains of Hembree and Seaman 1st Class Wilson A. Rice, the only two victims from the USS *Curtiss* never accounted for. Here cemetery workers carefully and reverently remove the metal casket from the grave.

(Note: There was one additional unknown buried in this group. Our theory is that this 15th man is Radioman 3rd Class Mitchell Cohn, who was the gunner in an SBD-2 scout bomber of naval squadron VS-6 from the aircraft carrier USS *Enterprise* that was shot down by Japanese aircraft on December 7 and crashed near Hickam Field. One of the Schofield Barracks unknowns is listed as 'possibly a pilot'. All of the Army Air Corps pilots are accounted for, so he must be a Navy airman. Cohn is the only unknown from the *Enterprise* group.)

Navy burials at that time were in the Navy plot at Nuuanu Cemetery in Honolulu. In the aftermath of the attack the available grave space at Nuuanu rapidly filled to capacity. The Navy then constructed a temporary cemetery at Halawa, which remained in operation until after the war. The Navy and Marine missing that day were largely on the ships in the Harbor (1,585 out of 1,588). On the morning of the attack there was a total of 150 vessels in the harbor. This figure includes all of the ships and associated yard craft. Not all of the vessels sustained casualties that day. Even fewer had casualties involving missing personnel. To study those cases we had to break it down by individual vessels.

USS *ARIZONA*

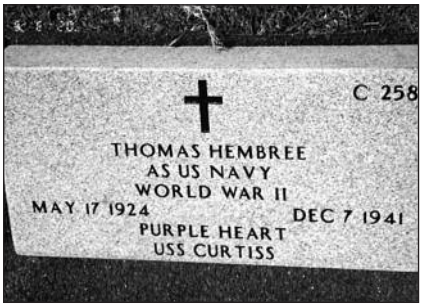
Without a doubt this ship presents the largest problem for unraveling the unknown mystery. The sheer numbers involved make this group the hardest to isolate and track. In the final accounting 1,072 personnel from the vessel were listed as missing (1,019 Navy and 53 Marines). Most people are under the misconception that all are still aboard the ship. That is not the case. Fifty-nine of her crew were identified and are buried. The Punchbowl contains the remains of at least 124 of her crewmen listed as unknowns.

USS *CALIFORNIA*

There are 22 unknowns in Punchbowl from the ship while the vessel has 20 listed as missing.

USS *CURTISS*

Apprentice Seaman Thomas Hembree was a sailor aboard this seaplane tender and killed during the Pearl Harbor attack. He was the first serviceman to be identified as a result of our work. Ray Emory found Hembree's grave by using burial records and personnel files and matching the dental records from both. At that time we were still building up the databases, and Ray accomplished his match manually. Presenting his conclusions to the authorities, he succeeded in convincing them to re-open the case. The CILHI forensic experts dug up the remains on January 30, 2001, and they endorsed Ray's findings the following November, making Hembree the first buried unknown to be officially identified since 1951 when the WWII identification process stopped, and the very first Pearl Harbor unknown to be identified in 60 years. Hembree was re-interred with a new headstone on March 5, 2002. What makes Hembree's case so important is that Ray proved it could be done.



For 60 years an unknown grave . . . The new headstone for grave C-258.

Ten months later, on November 28, 2001, the CILHI forensic lab announced that the remains did not belong to Rice but had been positively identified as those of Hembree. DNA testing had been inconclusive but a certain ID had been made through a dental match. On March 5, 2002, Hembree was re-interred in Punchbowl with full military honours, including a rifle-firing detail and the playing of Taps. Seventeen family members — mostly nephews and nieces — from California, Washington and Florida were present at the ceremony.

USS *NEVADA*

There are two unknowns in Punchbowl from the ship.

USS *OKLAHOMA*

Repeatedly struck by aerial torpedoes, the ship had the misfortune to capsize, trapping over 400 sailors inside the hull. Immediate salvage operations succeeded to rescue 32 sailors but 429 perished. During 1943, massive salvage operations managed to upright the ship and refloat her, enabling the remains of the sailors that had been trapped to be removed. Thirty-five of them were identified and buried as individuals in the Halawa Naval Cemetery, the remaining 394 were buried there together as unknowns. However, when these 394 were retrieved after the war to be re-interred in the Punchbowl, and the Army tried to re-assemble the bones back into individuals, they came up with 410 sets of remains instead of 394 — 16 too many. These 410 were buried together as unknowns in 52 graves. Although group burials of this nature were not uncommon, the case of the *Oklahoma* sailors is bizarre because the Army separated all of the skulls, femurs, hips, etc into different caskets — a decision that of course removed all possibilities of a later identification. For a long time, the Army tried to keep all this under wraps but in September 2003, after 14 years of work, we succeeded in changing their minds. They are now going to formally admit that they bungled the case, and that the number of *Oklahoma* unknowns in the Punchbowl is in fact 394.

USS *PENNSYLVANIA*

Fireman 2nd Class Payton L. Vanderpool was a sailor aboard the battleship USS *Pennsylvania* who was killed in the December 7 attack. He is important because he was the first match from our computer database. But it was more a comedy of errors than of skill. I had requested the Individual Deceased Personnel File (IDPF) from the Army for the unknowns that had been buried at Schofield Barracks. The Army wrote back and said they had no idea of what I was talking about but sent me four other unknown files from Halawa Cemetery. I made copies of them and sent them to Ray. He happened to have the IDPF on Vanderpool and matched the dental with an unknown buried in Grave Q-179 at the Punchbowl. Three days later our missing/unknown database came online and did the same thing. Presented with our findings, the Army disinterred the remains on June 18, 2003. The CILHI forensic experts have now confirmed that the remains are those of Vanderpool. The formal announcement is to be made on December 7, 2003 — the 42nd anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack.

USS *UTAH*

The remains of the ship rest to this day on the north-west side of Ford Island and serves as a memorial to the crewmen lost. At the time of the attack the ship was mistaken for an aircraft carrier and received a great deal of attention from the attackers. During salvage operations 14 bodies were removed and are presently buried in the Punchbowl as unknowns.

USS *WEST VIRGINIA*

The ship was badly damaged during the attack but settled on an even keel. There are 25 listed as missing from the *West Virginia*. The somewhat amazing thing is that there are 35 unknowns in the Punchbowl from the ship! We are presently focusing our efforts on this group as it has the best chance of producing results. It may be possible to ID all of her missing crewmen which would then bring into consideration the ten additional unknowns, which are no doubt from other ships in the vicinity.

On June 18, 2003, again on the basis of research carried out by Ted Darcy and Ray Emory, the CILHI disinterred the caskets of two other Pearl Harbor unknowns at Punchbowl, those in Graves P-1002 and Q-179. The remains in Q-179 have now been confirmed to be those of Payton Vanderpool *(below)*, a victim from the USS *Pennsylvania*, although the formal announcement will not be made until December 7, 2003. Those in P-1002 are believed to be those of Ensign Eldon P. Wyman, who was on the battleship USS *Oklahoma*, but the outcome of his case is still pending.

Are other battles similar in the way the dead were handled? Yes. To date Tarawa (see *After the Battle* No. 15) seems to be the worst for two reasons. First, not all of the dead were recovered by the Army from the island after the war. Second, the Army buried 123 unknowns in the Punchbowl from Tarawa. Our present figures show that the Marine Corps buried 149 personnel by name that later came up missing when the Army finished. If you deduct the 123 unknowns in Punchbowl from that figure, the Army left at least 26 bodies on Tarawa.

Are there many isolated cases? Yes. Most of them involve aircraft. The saddest no doubt is that of Ensign Harry M. Warnke. His F6F aircraft crashed on June 15, 1944 within four miles of the present day headquarters of the CILHI. They have had the case since 1993, found the wreck in 1999, but still have not recovered his remains from the site. They are awaiting an environmental impact statement, which the state of Hawaii has already told them they do not need.

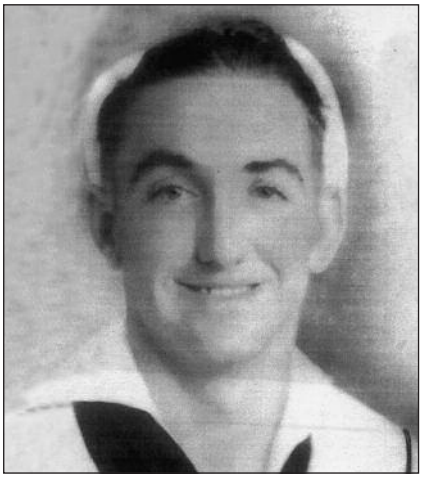
Is the Army totally responsible for the errors? No. They have made their fair share of mistakes and have shown apathy on more than one occasion but not all of the problems are their fault. They were tasked with the recovery and burial of all servicemen outside of the continental United States. It seems the Navy did not bother to tell them about numerous burials along the US coastline. Cases in point are the USS *Gheradi* incident, when a motor whaleboat of that ship capsized in Narragansett Bay, Rhode Island, on the night of December 1/2, 1942, and 15 sailors were drowned. In due course, 12 bodies were recovered and identified. Eight months later, on August 10, 1943, a body was recovered from the waters of the bay and determined to be that of an unidentified Navy enlisted man. Initial research carried out by us in 1995-97 showed that it is most probably one of the three *Gheradi* missing, Seaman 1st Class Cecil C. Joyner, but for lack of dental match one would need a DNA sample of a next of kin to prove it. His hometown was Jacksonville, Florida, but we have not been able to locate the next of kin. Another case is a PB4Y aircraft off Block Island with the crew still aboard. None of these cases were ever turned over to the Army for reconciliation.

What problems did the Army face? Political pressure. Soviet occupation of areas where US aircraft crashed. Casket shipping containers. Demobilisation and lack of trained personnel. No prior experience.

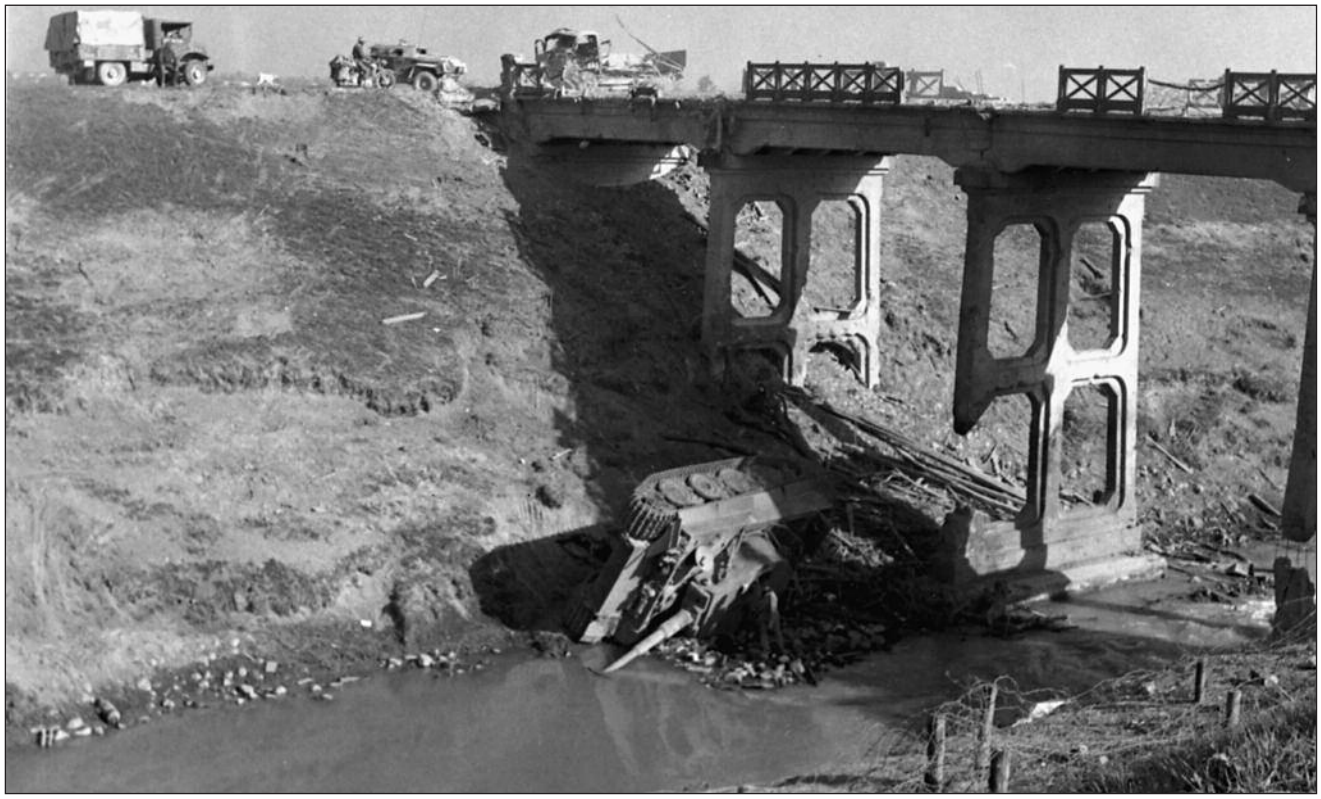
In fairness to the Army, personal computers were not available at the time. Our databases take a wide variety of identification points into consideration. Once we get a match, we forward the information to the scientific staff at CILHI. The final ID has to be done by dental records at CILHI. (DNA can not be used because of the embalming compound used during the war.)

Can these shortcomings be corrected, some 60 years later? For the most part yes. The biggest problem is the Army. We are now only allowed to order five records at a time and it is taking 8-12 months to get them. Two years ago we could order an unlimited number of records and it only took eight weeks. Funding and more co-operation would result in identifying most of these unknowns.

If any readers have copies of IDPFs for missing servicemen, or questions in general, please contact Ted Darcy at WFI Research Group, PO Box 231, Fall River, MA 02724-0231, USA (*wreck1@localnet.com*).



Fireman 2nd Class Payton Vanderpool.



On April 12, 1945, a stiff encounter took place near the town of Massa Lombarda in northern Italy when infantry of the 26th New Zealand Battalion, supported by Sherman tanks of the 20th NZ Armoured Regiment, ran into Tiger tanks of the German schwere Panzer-Abteilung 504. In the ensuing fight the Germans lost at least five Tigers. Even in the run-up to that battle, Panzer-Abteilung 504 had already suffered tank losses. During the unit's initial retreat to Massa Lombarda on April 10, its 1. Kompanie was forced to use the Cà di Lugo Bridge over the Santerno river because the bridge in the main road at Sant' Agata Santerno, further south, had been destroyed by the Allied artillery bombardment. After coming under enemy fire, this Tiger commanded by Unteroffizier Ludwig, its driver blinded by the shell-fire, tipped over the side of the bridge and fell into the river below. The crew escaped, though some were critically injured. (IWM)

THE TIGERS OF MASSA LOMBARDA

By Jeffrey Plowman, Daniele Guglielmi and Federico Peyrani

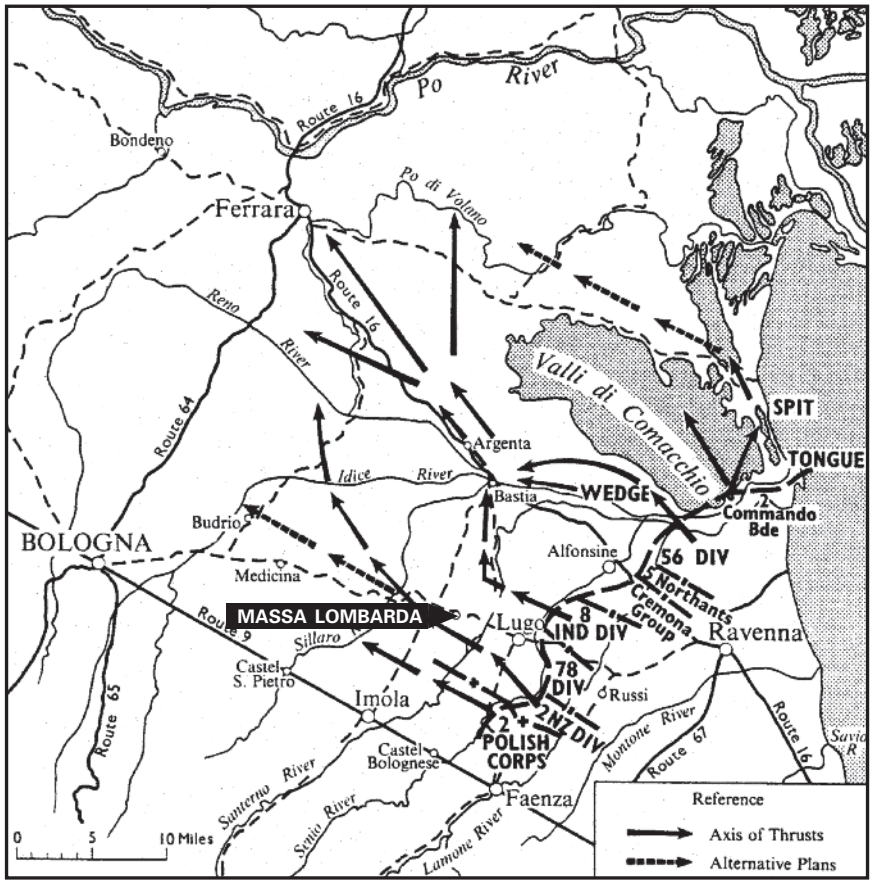
The final Allied assault on the Germans in Italy began early in April 1945. For the 2nd New Zealand Division, operating as part of V Corps on the right flank of British Eighth Army, this involved a night assault across the Senio river line on the night of April 9/10, 1945. This attack, launched after a devastating bombing attack and strong artillery fire, was a complete success and by the following evening the division had penetrated as far as the next major river, the Santerno. That night troops were pushed across the Santerno and were well established on the other side the next morning. Efforts to strengthen the bridgehead continued that day with troops in the southern sector moving to secure the Santerno Morto (the river's old watercourse). However by evening it was apparent that if they wanted to open up the Lugo–Massa Lombarda road they would need two regiments of armour across the river. So sappers working that evening bulldozed several approaches for the bridging train, allowing the latter to complete their first bridge by nightfall, thus enabling both the 18th and 20th Armoured Regiments to cross that night. As the advance continued on April 12 a gap of around 1,000 yards opened up between the Maori Battalion and the 25th Battalion. As a result the 26th Battalion was brought up to fill the gap.

The 26th Battalion was ordered to attack at 3 p.m. that afternoon on a two-company front, with A Company on the right supported by No. 9 Troop from C Squadron, 20th Armoured Regiment, and B Company on the left supported by No. 10 Troop. As was usual practice in the 20th Armoured Regiment, the two 17-pounder Shermans had been detached from SHQ Troop of C Squadron with one being attached to each of the attacking tank troops. In addition, the two RHQ Troop 17-pounder Shermans were also placed under the command of C Squadron. This was an astute decision because the German troops from the 98. Volksgrenadier-Division around Massa Lombarda were backed up by Tigers from schwere Panzer-Abteilung 504: its 3. Kompanie was north of the Lugo–Massa Lombarda railway line, with 2. Kompanie to the south, while some Tigers from 1. Kompanie were on the northern edge of the town.

The bridge has since been replaced and vegetation now obscures the riverbed.

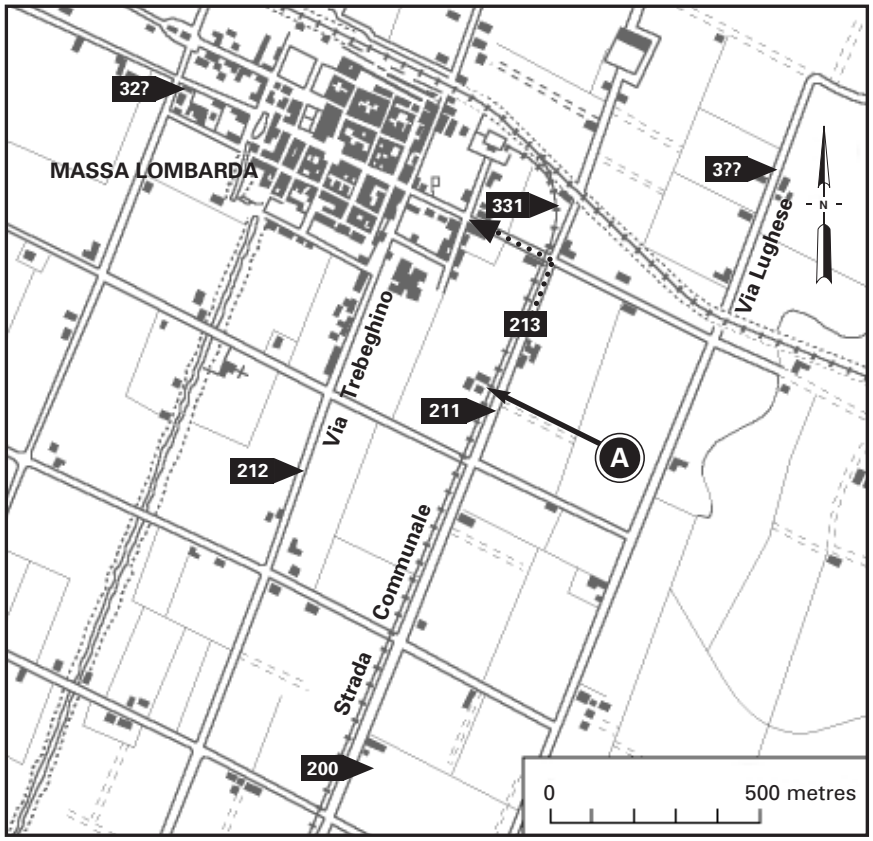
For Trooper Lindsay McCully this would be his first taste of action at the sharp end. Lindsay was a relative newcomer to the 20th Armoured Regiment having been posted to them around December 1944. On arrival at the unit's billets around Faenza he had been put in Sergeant Bill Armstrong's Sherman tank of No. 9 Troop, C Squadron, as the spare driver/hull gunner. Armstrong and his crew were all seasoned veterans of the Italian campaign. Armstrong was known as 'Dad' by the men because he was a few years older than the rest of them and they always seemed to go to him for advice. He had joined the regiment in mid-1943 after training in New Zealand with the 1st NZ Army Tank Brigade, a unit earmarked to provide tank support for the 2nd NZ Division. Corporal Shirley Hodson (gunner) had joined the regiment around the time it was at Cassino having trained in New Zealand with the 9th Wellington East Coast Mounted Rifles, while Corporal Rex Pepperell (loader/operator) had arrived shortly afterwards. Trooper Irwin James (driver), on the other hand, had probably seen more service than any of them, having served in the unit when it was still an infantry battalion. When it was converted to armour he elected to be retrained as a tank driver and stayed in that role for the rest of the war. It was probably because of this that he was more generally known as 'Bogie' James.

After marrying up with their infantry, the tanks from No. 9 Troop crossed the start line and pushed forward through the trees. The Santerno Morto on their front had not been cleared and they soon found themselves under fire from German infantry on the old stop bank. Unable to fire the main gun, for fear of premature explosion of the shell among the trees, Hodson opened up with the co-axial, while McCully brought the lap gun in the hull to bear on them and together they eventually forced the German troops to surrender.



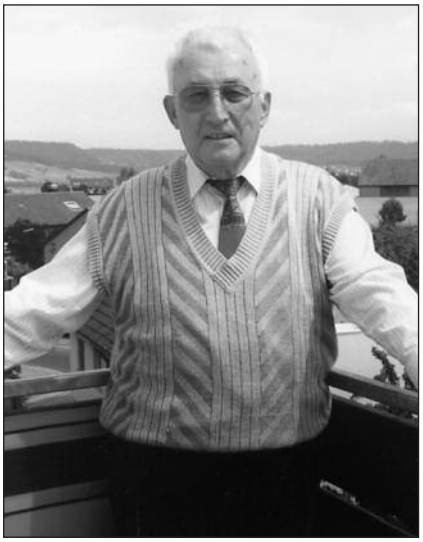
The attack on Massa Lombarda by the 2nd New Zealand Division was part of the general spring offensive launched by British Eighth Army on April 9. Intended to bring the war in Italy to an end, its initial aim was to gain crossings over the Senio and Santerno rivers, prior to a drive on Argenta and Bologna.

A key role in the action was played by Sergeant Bill Armstrong's 75mm Sherman of No. 9 troop of C Squadron, 20th Armoured Regiment. Here the crew pose for a snapshot somewhere in the Po valley. Standing from left to right: Corporal Rex Pepperell, Corporal Shirley Hodson and Sergeant Armstrong. Seated: Troopers Irwin 'Bogie' James and Lindsay McCully.



It has taken Jeffrey Plowman a long time to lift the fog of battle as to just what happened south of Massa Lombarda on April 12, but this is the most likely sequence of events. As the New Zealand forces approach the positions just south of town where the tanks of schwere Panzer-Abteilung 504 have drawn up a defensive screen, Tiger 200 breaks down and its crew sets its demolition charges before escaping on foot. Oberfeldwebel Fritz Kessel in Tiger 213 picks up two of the crew and one other man. While escaping northwards along the Strada Communale (a local road known to the New Zealanders as 'Greyhound'), his Tiger is seen by Sergeant Bill Armstrong's 75mm Sherman tank of No. 9 Troop, C Squadron, but not engaged. Shortly before turning off 'Greyhound' and making good his escape, Kessel sees Armstrong's tank crossing the road behind him. Following on behind Kessel, Unteroffizier Herbert Kaiser's Tiger 211, having picked up the rest of the crew of Tiger 200, is stopped by Sergeant Bruce Grainger and Corporal Bill Campbell of No. 8 Platoon with a PIAT and then given the final kill by Armstrong's tank. A further Tiger, No. 212 commanded by Leutnant Karl-Heinz Clemens, following along behind Kaiser's, sees the latter has encountered trouble and turns off the Strada Communale but is then knocked out by Sergeant 'Bull' Dowrick's 17-pounder Sherman on the parallel road to the west. Observing the fighting along 'Greyhound' from the edge of Massa Lombarda is Leutnant Hans-Heinrich von der Gabelentz in Tiger 331. He opposes the New Zealanders' advance until his tank throws a track and the crew is forced to abandon it. The map shows the positions of all the Tigers knocked out around Massa Lombarda, including a fifth one (3??) found destroyed on the Via Lughese, the main road running north to Lugo, and a sixth one (Tiger 32?) found disabled by its crew on the Tiglio road on the western side of town. The presumed route taken by Kessel (213) is marked, as is the probable route taken by Armstrong's Sherman (A).

Above: **Unteroffizier Friedrich Huhle was the radio operator in Tiger 200, the first tank to be lost by the Germans. This picture of him was taken in March or April 1944 when the unit was based at Wezep in the Netherlands.** *Below:* **Friedrich Huhle pictured at his home in Germany in July 2000.**



Pressing on they entered an olive grove in which lengths of wire were strung out between the trees. Unfortunately the main gun was still depressed and one of these wires ran up over it ripping loader/operator Pepperell's periscope out of the turret. Ordered by Armstrong to cut this wire McCully stood up in his seat, removing his headset in the process, and proceeded to sever this wire and several more that they encountered. Eventually they reached the end of the grove whereupon the tank swung to the right and moved down the embankment. With no more wires to cut Lindsay dropped back into his seat but forgot to replace his headset. The country beyond the Santerno Morto consisted of more trees and they proceeded at a steady pace through these, chasing the retreating Germans as they went. And so they pressed on towards their objective known as 'Greyhound', another road running laterally across their line of advance and known to the Italians as the Strada Communale.

However, enemy armour was in the vicinity. Two days before, retiring behind the Santerno, the Tigers of 2. Kompanie, schwere Panzer-Abteilung 504, had reached familiar territory as Massa Lombarda had previously served as their supply base. Unteroffizier Friedrich Huhle was the radio operator in Tiger No. 200, the 2. Kompanie command tank. His fellow crew members were Unteroffizier Paul Gamon (gunner), Obergefreiter August Rank (loader) and Obergefreiter Walter Schlarpp (driver), plus one extra man, despatch rider Obergefreiter Valentin Heintz. Their tank commander (and company CO), Hauptmann Herbert Heim, had been wounded on the 10th and his replacement, Oberleutnant Hecker, had been wounded after just a few hours, so gunner Gamon was now acting as tank commander.

In position nearby was another Tiger, No. 211, commanded by Unteroffizier Herbert Kaiser. His crew consisted of Unteroffizier Fritz Hampel (gunner), Obergefreiter Berthold Dölle (loader), Obergefreiter Willi Kornmann (radio operator) and Obergefreiter Ewald Kruska (driver). As recalled by Dölle, on the morning of April 12 they moved forward to the river, taking up a position in a fruit orchard, the trees of which were already coming into leaf, facing the embankment of the Santerno or Santerno Morto. The embankment was so high that they were unable to see what was going on behind it but, when Dölle went out to try to add some extra camouflage to the tank, he was fired upon by a machine gun.

Thus warned that it had been occupied by the enemy, and learning that their own infantry had already vanished, they pulled back behind a road, switching positions several times to gain more shooting range. Then, over the radio they heard that their company command tank, Tiger 200, was having transmission problems, followed shortly by a request to pick up the crew. As no recovery tank could get to Tiger 200 that day, Huhle and his crew had been forced to abandon it, setting its demolition charges in the process.

Their tank rendered immobile because of transmission problems, Huhle and his fellow crew members abandoned Tiger 200, although they were able to set it on fire with demolition charges before making off. Here, Italian partisans stand in front of the burnt-out hulk the day after the battle. The names of the two men on the tank are unknown as is the woman with the partisans on the ground. The rest are (L-R): Nicola Zagonara, Nilo Milanesi, Paride Lanzoni, Belgio Guidani and Guccio Bentini.

At least one New Zealander saw the destruction of Tiger 200. Acting Sergeant Ron Biggs was a runner for No. 9 Platoon of A Company, 26th Battalion. Approaching their objective that afternoon, he witnessed an explosion to his left just in front of the platoon's support Sherman, which went into reverse firing rapidly at a large farmhouse beside a lateral road immediately ahead. Then, as they closed on their objective, a Tiger, travelling from left to right on the road, drove past followed by some German infantry. Biggs recalls sending a radio message to warn the platoon to his right that it was coming. The Tiger was still moving down the road when he reached it, so Biggs, somewhat wisely, decided to head down to the left towards the farmhouse he had seen earlier where he could also see smoke rising from the yard. On reaching it he discovered that the smoke was pouring from a wrecked Tiger tank (No. 200). After attending to a wounded German soldier nearby he headed back towards where another Tiger now stood disabled with its crew sitting in the ditch beside it guarded by some New Zealand soldiers.

As events would show, the Tigers of 2. Kompanie had made a fatal mistake of attempting to withdraw along the very road that formed the objective for the 26th Battalion's attack. Not that they had much choice: some 600 yards to the west of this road the plain was intersected by an irrigation ditch set atop a high embankment which was too steep for the Tigers to negotiate. Thus their only escape route lay along two roads leading towards the main highway between Massa Lombarda and Lugo.

One of the first Tigers to get onto one of these roads — and one that managed to get away — was No. 213 commanded by Oberfeldwebel Fritz Kessel. Earlier in the day, he had left his Tiger to make contact with the infantry in front of him. Instead he found them falling back, demoralised by the heavy artillery bombardment and air attack. Faced with no other choice he too fell back, eventually reaching one of the side roads leading to Massa Lombarda. Just beyond the abandoned hulk of Tiger 200 he stopped to pick up and take on board two of the latter's crew, gunner Gamon and driver Schlarpp, and, beyond them, an artillery observer before proceeding onwards.

Further to the north of No. 9 Platoon, Armstrong's tank finally emerged from the woods they had been travelling through and made for a small cart track in the middle of a field. Fearing it was mined Armstrong ordered 'Bogie' James to drive along the right side of it. The cart track led to their objective 'Greyhound' and just beyond it was a two-storied house. Hodson was in the middle of shooting it up when he heard Armstrong yell 'God Almighty! Traverse right, there's a Tiger!'

Pinpointing the exact spot where Tiger 200 met its end was difficult as Friedrich Huhle could only provide a rough indication of its position. The only existing photographs of the disabled tank show it sitting in a wooded location. However it must have been reasonably close to the Strada Communale for Oberfeldwebel Kessel in Tiger 213 to see it as he drove past. This picture was taken looking south-east from the latter road and shows the approximate position indicated by Huhle. Now wheat grows where trees once stood.

The second tank lost by Panzer-Abteilung 504 was Tiger 211, here being towed off the road by a Sherman ARV (armoured recovery vehicle) from the 18th NZ Armoured Regiment after the battle. When shown this photograph, Lindsay McCully was adamant that the house in the background was the one they pulled in behind after first crossing the Strada Communale, and that when they first saw the Tiger it was beyond the house further down the road. (Alexander Turnbull Library)

James saw it fire a shot before moving off, as did McCully. According to McCully the Tiger, travelling from the left, had emerged from some trees lining the road, stopped, swung its gun towards them and fired a shot. Fortunately it missed, striking the embankment of the cart track to their left. Better still, the Tiger showed no inclination to stay and fight and moved off again into another line of trees along the road, its turret slowly swinging away.

However, Kessel (for it was most likely his Tiger 213) in his account maintained that he took no action against any enemy tanks. Instead just before the main road between Lugo and Massa Lombarda, he looked back to see an enemy tank (Armstrong's or one of the other support Shermans) on the road behind him. As it was impossible to traverse the turret and fight with three extra men on board he carried on until he reached the main road, where he turned left towards Massa Lombarda and freedom. To his relief the enemy tank behind him turned and drove off in another direction.

The conflicting versions of this encounter — so familiar in the confusion of battle — leave room for reconciliation. There is no reason to doubt that Armstrong, James and McCully did see a Tiger crossing in front of them and that they were fired at, but maybe it was not the Tiger that fired. As McCully himself later suggested, the flash they saw could equally well have come from an Ofenrohr (German bazooka) or Panzerfaust fired by a German infantryman.

Armstrong then made for the two-storey house on the other side of 'Greyhound' throwing the crew around as the tank hit ditches on either side of the road. As Hodson later recorded: 'Morale bloody low. Pulled behind house to recover from fright.'

But their ordeal was far from over. When their supporting infantry joined them at the house they warned them of another Tiger coming down 'Greyhound' towards them. This was Kaiser's Tiger 211. It was as overloaded as Kessel's 213 had been, for Kaiser had picked up the remaining three crew members of Tiger 200, Huhle, Rank and Heintz. Kaiser must have seen Armstrong's tank for, at one stage, he was heard to call out: 'Tank to the left' and 'Another tank to the right'. But however much warning he had, he was certainly unprepared for the hail of fire he was about to receive. What occurred next was long thought to be two separate events — with the New Zealand infantry knocking out one Tiger and Armstrong's Sherman knocking out another — but was almost certainly, despite the small variations in the various accounts, the destruction of one and the same Tiger: Kaiser's 211.

It is quite possible that Corporal Bill Campbell, moving forward with No. 8 Platoon of A Company, was among the infantry supporting Armstrong's Sherman as he recalled hearing a tank moving to the right along a road beside a railway ahead of him although he was unable to get a view of it. His platoon commander moved forward to a house they had seen across the road and on finding it unoccupied called up their supporting Sherman. It had only been in position for a few minutes when another tank was heard approaching along the same road. Grabbing the PIAT gun from the back of the Sherman, Campbell and Sergeant Bruce Grainger raced across a field and dived into a ditch. The tank turned out to be another Tiger. After spotting the Sherman it slowed to a halt, firing a shot, which missed the Sherman but killed a soldier from No. 8 Platoon. Campbell lobbed a PIAT bomb at the Tiger and this struck it at the bottom of the turret. He later claimed that though it failed to penetrate it blew off splinters inside the tank wounding the nearest member of the crew. As Grainger remembered it, their supporting Sherman then fired two smoke shells forcing the Tiger crew to bail out, some of whom dived under the tank. As the Germans were armed, Grainger and Campbell fired another PIAT bomb at the suspension, and splinters from it wounded two of the Tiger crew. By this time, their support Sherman was firing armour-piercing (AP) shells, one of which gouged a deep grove in the 88mm barrel of the Tiger. At this point the German crew surrendered.

Right: **Although post-war accounts have treated the actions as separate engagements, it is now practically certain that this same tank, Tiger 211, was also the one engaged at close range with a PIAT by Sergeant Bruce Grainger and Corporal Bill Campbell of No. 8 Platoon of A Company, 26th Battalion. This snapshot of Campbell (left) and Grainger (right) was taken outside the Castello San Giusto in Trieste in June 1945.**

It is practically certain that this Tiger was in fact Kaiser's 211 and the same one as that engaged by Armstrong's Sherman. As recalled by McCully, their Tiger was initially obscured by trees lining the road. When it emerged from these, the first round of 'Yank smoke' burst on the front of the Tiger in an intense white ball. The second round, an armour-piercing high explosive (APHE), struck the ventilator above the driver, was deflected through the superstructure and burst in the transmission, thus bringing the Tiger to a halt. The tank, which had been going flat out, came to a halt about 50 yards from them. Hodson then emptied his ammunition rack ring, which contained seven rounds of smoke, two AP and seven APHE, while McCully sprayed the Tiger with his Browning. None of these rounds penetrated the tank.

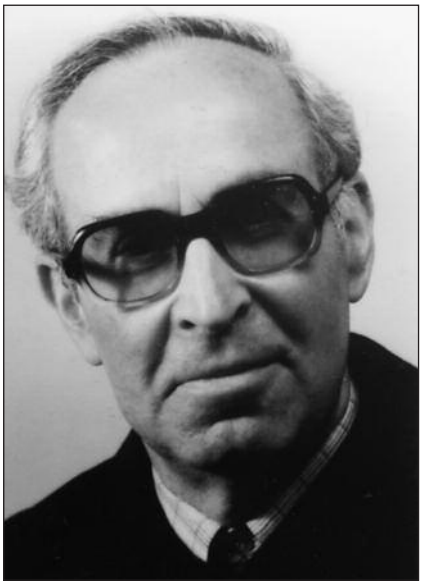
A few steel rails on the shingle ballast in front of the ARV are all that remain of the railway line to Imola that ran beside the Strada Communale, the Germans having removed a lot of the sleepers and tracks in this area to incorporate them in their defensive positions. (P. Dixon)

Cramped inside Tiger 211 were eight men. Huhle recalled how the sweet-tasting smoke permeated the inside of the tank, literally covering the men and taking their breath and sight away, and how the tank rocked when round after round smashed into it, damaging the gun, mantlet and turret ring. Eventually they could take no more and when the fire slackened they bailed out. McCully saw the hatches fly open and immediately turned his attention to them, as did Hodson with the co-axial. Hampel leapt out of the tank and dived into the ditch on the opposite side of the road to the Sherman. He then raced and scrambled along the ditch in the direction of the main road between Lugo and Massa Lombarda, coming under fire from Armstrong's tank and its supporting infantry. McCully followed him with his Browning but ran out of traverse just as he got his tracer onto the escaping German. He then turned his attention back to the stricken Tiger, firing alternately at the front of the tank, where he had seen one man take shelter, and the rear, where another had crawled. It was then that he received a sharp kick in the back and, on turning, saw a rather angry Armstrong batting his own ears with his hands. At that point McCully realised that he had forgotten to replace his headset after leaving the olive grove. On doing so he received orders to start passing shells back to Pepperell. With more ammunition, Hodson fired off two more shells and then finally ceased fire. Their supporting infantry then closed in on the Tiger, firing as they went.

Huhle, under the Tiger at the rear, remembers receiving fire at close range from a Thompson sub-machine gun, one bullet entering his navel and lodging in his left armpit. Kruska, lying under the tank at the front, received similar attention and showed no signs of life after the New Zealand infantry had ceased fire. Heintz and Kornmann, sheltering in a ditch beside the tank, were also wounded in the engagement. Hampel and Kaiser had managed to get out before Dölle got his hatch open, Hampel scrambling off through the ditch as just described, and Kaiser escaping through a blind spot in the New Zealand fire. Rank and Dölle were not so lucky. Dölle jumped into a ditch by the road and crept back along it. After travelling about 30 metres he looked up and came under fire. Lacking a weapon or the opportunity to get across the road without being seen, he had no option but to surrender, especially after he saw Rank with his hands up. Dölle saw Huhle and Kruska lying

Above: **Massa Lombarda has since encroached on the old battleground and when Jeffrey Plowman first visited the town in September 2000 this spot on what is today the Via Amendola was his best guess for the location of the encounter between Tiger 211 and Armstrong's tank. Later he was able to confirm that in fact it took place some 100 yards further down the road.** *Below:* **The house used by Armstrong's tank for shelter is still there, though somewhat modified from its original form.**

Right: **Obergefreiter Berthold Dölle and Obergefreiter Ewald Kruska were the loader and driver of Tiger 211 respectively. Of the eight men that were inside the tank when it was knocked out (the five crew members plus the three men from Tiger 200 they had picked up), two escaped, one (Kruska) was killed and five were captured, three of them wounded. Dölle was captured unharmed, although he narrowly escaped being executed on the spot by one of the New Zealand soldiers shortly after. This photograph of Dölle and Kruska was among some negatives found in Tiger 211 by Trooper 'Bogie' James after the battle.**



Berthold Dölle today.

underneath the tank but when he wanted to take a closer look he received a strong kick from behind.

As they were marched away, Dölle noticed that Armstrong, now out of his tank, appeared to be reasoning with the New Zealand infantrymen who, by this time, were looting the Tiger and throwing items down to their mates on the ground. McCully recalls that Armstrong was clearly angry with their supporting infantry and, in particular, their looting while ignoring the wounded Germans' plight. Armstrong later commented to his crew that the 26th Battalion soldiers had remarked that one of them had been a bit rough on the Germans.

Probably one of the least savoury parts of the battle is what occurred next. Dölle and Rank were joined by two German soldiers who had been captured in the general area, one of whom was wounded. After being marched away from Armstrong's Sherman, they were witness to one of the New Zealanders shooting and killing this soldier with a sub-machine gun. Dölle, Rank and the other German soldier were lined up against a wall all believing themselves about to be killed. Dölle recalled that at this point Armstrong intervened and prevented them from being shot as well.

The Germans had no idea just what had prompted this summary killing of a fellow POW. The 20th Armoured Regiment official history refers to the incident as follows: 'The tank commander, a young panzergrenadier lieutenant, was a truculent prisoner: he emptied the magazine of his Luger at the platoon's sergeant while the latter's Tommy gun was not loaded and later attacked him with his fists when it was and was shot.' This account is ambiguous as to whether the POW killed was a tanker or an infantryman, for panzer commanders never belong to the panzergrenadiers (armoured infantry). If he was a tanker, Huhle and Dölle are adamant that none of the crew of Tiger 211 were involved in this incident. Thus Dölle and Rank may have been witnesses to a New Zealand soldier's response to something that had occurred earlier.

Left: **This is the position where the ARV dropped off Tiger 211. We are looking north towards the Via Lughese, the main road from Massa Lombarda to Lugo. The local Italians were quick to strip the wreck for parts, as the man in the picture is doing.** *Right:* **The building in the background today houses a local historical museum on what is now the Via Amendola.**

Right: **Another view of Tiger 211 being inspected by New Zealand troops. By the time this photograph was taken, local Italians had removed most of the tracks and running gear from the tank. Although one account of the battle says that one of the armour-piercing rounds fired at the Tiger 'gouged a deep grove in the 88mm barrel', it appears from this picture that the round had actually penetrated it.**

Left: **The third tank to be lost by the Germans was Tiger 331, abandoned by its crew after it threw its right-hand track. Although the turret number of the tank that Leutnant von der Gabelentz of 3. Kompanie fought in at Massa Lombarda is unknown, there are enough similarities with his account to assume that this particular Tiger was his: the number showing it to be one of 3. Kompanie's tanks; its proximity to a railway line; the loss of the track; and the fact that it is lying on a slight slant.** *Right:* **According to an 85-year-old local resident, Mr Brunone, Tiger 331 was abandoned in the grounds of the CIMA fruit factory near where the Via Amendola crosses the main Massa Lombarda—Lugo railway line. While the present-day factory appears to have been extended after the war, its eastern end is remarkably similar to the building visible behind Tiger 331. A tank at this spot would have been in a good position to observe Tiger 211 further down the Strada Communale, which provides additional support for the theory that Tiger 331 was the one abandoned by von der Gabelentz.**

Meanwhile, unbeknown to the New Zealand troops around Tiger 211, they had come to the notice of another Tiger. Earlier in the afternoon Leutnant Hans-Heinrich von der Gabelentz, a platoon commander in 3. Kompanie, was unfortunate to have his tank disabled by one of their own Ofenrohr teams. After changing to another Tiger (No. 331, as would appear from the photographic evidence) he took up and held a position near the exit to Massa Lombarda until his own tank could be recovered. Although his position came under intense artillery fire and attack from aircraft, he was more successful than he imagined as the troops from A Company, 28th Maori Battalion, whom he was opposing, reported that a Tiger firing from behind a railway embankment had destroyed its anti-tank gun. After his first Tiger had been recovered von der Gabelentz pulled back but, while trying to cross a railway embankment, his left track was hit by artillery fire and rolled off. Looking to his left he saw a Tiger from 2. Kompanie with one or two prisoners standing nearby (this must have been No. 211) but, when he tried to turn his turret in that direction, he found he was unable to because his Tiger was lying on a slight slant. Then, after receiving fire from an enemy tank, he and his crew were forced to abandon their Tiger and escape on foot.

Right: **Rear view showing that Tiger 331 had also suffered damage to the exhaust stacks. Note that the turret has been turned since the previous photo was taken. (J. Nicholson)**

Left: **From this photograph of Tiger 331 it is apparent that there is a branch running off the railway line in front of it. Contemporary maps indicate that in 1945 a siding ran off the Massa Lombarda—Imola line just before it joined the main line, strengthening the idea that this is the correct location. (J. Nicholson)** *Above:* **Our comparison was taken looking in the opposite direction to show how the west end of the factory has been altered.**

The fourth Tiger lost by the Germans was No. 212 commanded by Leutnant Karl-Heinz Clemens. It was knocked out on the parallel road to the west of the Strada Communale. According to locals, the tank was seen to approach this road across country from the left and, finding the ditch beside it too wide to cross, turned and drove alongside the ditch until it found a bridge leading onto the road, behind the two-storied house in the background.

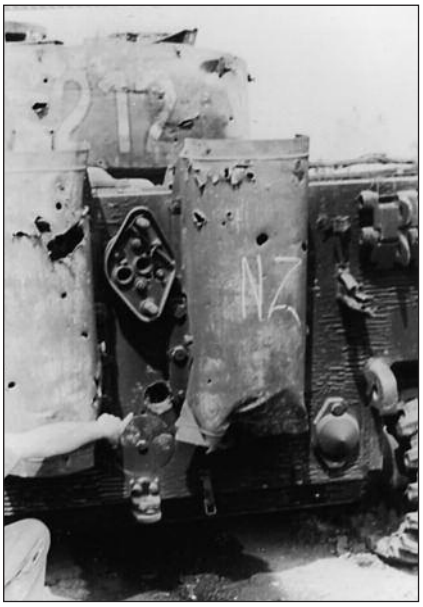
Meanwhile, the New Zealanders had spotted yet another Tiger trying to get away. This was Tiger 212 commanded by Leutnant Karl-Heinz Clemens, with gunner Obergefreiter Horst Fahn and driver Unteroffizier Kurt Herrmann. (The names of the other two crew members are unknown.) There is evidence to suggest that Clemens, too, was escaping along 'Greyhound' but at some point turned off this road. Local Italians recalled seeing a Tiger traversing a field that day and, on reaching an irrigation ditch, being forced to turn along it before finding a bridge. After this it turned onto the next road parallel to 'Greyhound' and made for Massa Lombarda. Quite possibly Clemens had seen what had happened to Kaiser's Tiger and had decided to take hasty evasive action.

C Squadron must have ordered forward one of their supporting 17-pounder Shermans to back up Armstrong because one of them, commanded by Lance-Sergeant F. W. D. 'Bull' Dowrick from Squadron HQ, showed up around this time. Sergeant R. J. Cranston of the 20th guided it forward to where the Tiger had last been seen. They found it sitting stationary in the middle of some crossroads and to his satisfaction Dowrick noted that it was facing the other way. Not that it was a real threat anyway. As Horst Fahn recalled, during their escape their tank had driven into a ditch and in the process pushed the gun back 'out of battery' so that it was no longer able to fire.

The same spot today on Via Trebeghino. The landscape is more open now except on the right where new housing is evident.

Tiger 212 was knocked out by fire from the 17-pounder Sherman commanded by Lance-Sergeant F. W. D. 'Bull' Dowrick *(left)* **of SHQ Troop.** *Right:* **This picture of Dowrick's tank was taken one day later, after it had in turn been knocked out by a Panther at Palazzo Guerrino, six kilometres to the west of Massa Lombarda. The second shell killed the driver, jamming the mantlet in the process. Dowrick and the turret crew were then forced to jump from the tank as it circled round in the field. From this photograph it is apparent that it eventually came to rest after throwing a track.**

When Dowrick opened fire on Tiger 212 from the rear, the latter was in fact unable to retaliate, its 88mm gun having earlier become stuck in partial recoil position, as can be seen in this side view of the tank.



A close-up showing where one of the APDS rounds fired by Dowrick's Sherman penetrated Tiger 212.

Firing from cover Dowrick's gunner lobbed an Armour Piercing Discarding Sabot (APDS) round into the rear of the Tiger. After the first shell slammed into the tank, Leutnant Clemens sagged unconscious in his seat. Struggling to take over command, Fahn tried to lay Clemens over the rear of the gun so that he could get to the commander's station but when the Tiger was struck again by another shell he had no choice but to abandon the tank. First he heaved Clemens out of the turret and rolled him onto the ground. Then he and Herrmann dragged the now conscious lieutenant back to their own lines. On the way they were joined by the two escapees from Tiger 211, Kaiser and Hampel, the latter having been shot across the chest while jumping from Tiger 211. What happened to the other crew members of Tiger 212 is less certain though according to 20th Armoured Regiment records one was later found dead inside the tank.

Back at Tiger 211 the infantry from the 26th Battalion were now digging in. Increasing mortar fire around the house had forced Armstrong to move back alongside the Tiger. Armstrong saw the top of a church tower above the trees and, reasoning that the Germans could be directing fire from it, ordered Hodson to engage it. After putting about five rounds into it Armstrong called a halt to the fire but, when Hodson said there was still 'one up the spout' and could he let it go, Armstrong agreed. When that shell struck the tower, it shook, twisted and then crashed down. Shortly after that the mortaring ceased.

By then it was getting dark and, with their tank so close to the wrecked Tiger, they could hear the moans and groans coming from the three wounded German tankers — Huhle, Heintz and Kornmann — in the ditch nearby. So Hodson and McCully clambered out of the tank and proceeded to administer morphine to each one. Shortly after climbing back in they were recalled to headquarters. Here McCully spent the better part of an hour clearing out the spent shell cases that had dropped to the floor of the tank. Afraid to get out after his ordeal he eventually fell asleep inside.

A Sherman from the 18th Armoured Regiment entering the main gate of Massa Lombarda after the final capture of the town.

Right: **After the war the gate was demolished and, apparently, with it the buildings on either side. Fortunately some of the original houses beyond survive.**

One other tank to be lost by the Germans near Massa Lombarda was this one, found abandoned on the Via Lughese, the main road to Lugo. Attached to it was the notice: 'Smashed by the Desert Air Force'. Official New Zealand accounts talk of three Tigers being seen near a house beyond the Santerno on April 11, the day before the 26th Battalion's launched its attack on the town. One was set on fire by the New Zealanders' supporting artillery and the rest were seen to make off, suggesting that this was the tank destroyed on that occasion. The following day a Tiger was reported brewed up by a Sherman from the 18th Armoured Regiment despite the fact that it was sitting out in the open and considered to be derelict. It could well have been this tank or von der Gabelentz's. (IWM)

The following day, after passing Massa Lombarda, the squadron stopped for a brew up. McCully recalled a bad reaction setting in. He started to get the shakes and then threw himself to the ground when an artillery barrage started up behind them. Fortunately one of 'Bogie' James' mates pulled him up and calmed him down, and from that point on until the end of the war in Trieste he was fine.

Huhle, Kornmann and Heintz remained in the ditch for the rest of the night disturbed only by the occasional passage of New Zealand infantry. When morning arrived Kornmann heaved himself up and staggered down the road to get help. This was the last Huhle ever saw of him. Finally around 7 a.m. a medical Jeep arrived and loaded Huhle and Heintz onto stretchers, taking them, first to a field medical station, where they received emergency treatment and, later, to Forli General Hospital. Here Heintz had his lower left leg, lower left arm and a finger on his right hand amputated. Huhle remained in critical care for many days, the bullet having passed through his stomach, spleen and lung. He was also an object of attention for another reason, being referred to by the nurses as 'Fritz with electric green hair', a result of exposure to the hexachloroethane used in the smoke shells.

After his recovery Huhle spent 18 months in various camps before being released to his family in East Germany but not for long. In 1959 he his wife and their two young boys made the perilous crossing from East to West Berlin. Dölle and Rank were eventually transferred to a prisoner of war camp in Egypt and then finally released in 1948.

The same house survives unchanged, though other buildings have sprung up beside it, on what is now known as the Viale Ravenna. The house is still occupied by the Bagnaresi family.

The story of Armstrong's Tiger has long fascinated me (Jeffrey Plowman) but this reconstruction of events would not have come about but for a fortuitous series of events. One of these was the discovery of the German version of events in the book by Egon Kleine and Volkmar Kühn, Tiger. A History of a Legendary Weapon*. Another was an association I developed with Daniele Guglielmi in Florence. Little did I realise at the time that Daniele was in contact with veterans from schwere Panzer-Abteilung 504 through another friend of his in Milan, Federico Peyrani, or that he was passing on information to them from me on these events, including my own writing. That is until I learned that some of these veterans might be interested in contacting their New Zealand counterparts and myself. Eventually it became apparent that only one of them, Friedrich Huhle, was interested in doing so and so it was with some trepidation that I awaited his letter. After all, what does one say to the victim of what has been reported as a New Zealand atrocity. In fact he could not have been nicer and complimented me on the way I dealt with the facts in an even handed manner. As I was to learn Huhle and his comrades, while harbouring less than charitable thoughts towards New Zealanders because of what happened to them, had always held in high regard the actions of an 'English' tank commander, whom they regarded as having saved their lives. Naturally the discovery that he too, was a New Zealander changed their perspective somewhat. As Berthold Dölle commented in a letter: 'I was very astonished how honestly you answered our questions, that was a lesson for me that one should never generalise.'*

Making contact with Huhle and Dölle led to the discovery that the German version had become a little distorted in Kleine and Kühn's account. This in turn prompted me to wonder what more could be found out of the New Zealand side of the story. The official New Zealand account was based on a narrative that Hodson, the gunner in Armstrong's crew, had related to the unit historian at Maadi camp in Egypt after the war. Unfortunately it was not possible to trace the original. I contacted the 20th Battalion and Armoured Regiment Association but it was their belief that Armstrong and his crew were all dead. Nevertheless an advertisement in their newsletter eventually put me in contact with the widows of Hodson, James and Armstrong, all of whom were most helpful.

But the biggest surprise of all was to receive a call one night from Lindsay McCully. Far from being dead, he had simply lost touch with the association, a result of frequent transfers when he worked for the Railways Department. He had tried to put the war behind him but, as I later discovered, my request for information brought it all flooding back to him. Painful as it was Lindsay was willing to recount what happened and, realising that his health was not the best, I managed to arrange for a friend, Colin Smith, who lived nearby, to conduct an interview with him.

Lindsay McCully, a key participant in the action, here pictured on Anzac Day 2000. Sadly, he died of cancer on April 29, 2003.

Despite carrying deep-seated grudges towards the Germans, because of what he saw happening to his mates, McCully was also interested in contacting Huhle directly and they eventually exchanged letters at Christmas that year. From then onwards we maintained a three-way contact, which became harder for Lindsay as he struggled with, what turned out to be, invasive cancer. Eventually he would say that Friedrich 'seems to be decent sort of guy.'

I was eventually able to visit Italy in the autumn of 2000 and Daniele kindly took me to Massa Lombarda where I met Federico Peyrani. McCully's memory of the event was so strong that it was possible to pinpoint on a 1945 map the most likely site of his fateful engagement. It was easy to locate the road known as 'Greyhound' but the area where we believe the two tanks met has changed considerably since the war, houses now covering the ground where there once were open fields. One elderly local we met outside a museum along 'Greyhound' was able to confirm that all the Tigers were knocked out within the current city limits.

On returning to New Zealand it was possible to find map references in the 20th Armoured Regiment diary but these indicated the tanks were abandoned in quite different locations and this did not make any sense when related to both the official and unofficial accounts we had been collecting.

Eventually through an article in the Massa Lombarda newspaper more photographs were discovered. These enabled us to pinpoint the engagement between Tiger 211 and Armstrong's Sherman close to where we had first stopped to talk to the elderly Italian. But the investigation did not stop there. As more photographs were uncovered and more correspondence entered into with the various participants it was possible to widen the investigation to examine what happened to other Tigers known to have been knocked out in the general area.

One of the things that soon became evident was the parallels between the accounts of the German and New Zealand tank crews but also between that of Campbell's, which he recorded in Trieste at the end of the war. Grainger's account also supports Campbell's account though he does differ from it to the extent that he maintains there were only four men in the Tiger, they were not wounded and their supporting tank fired only one shot.

The destruction of the Tiger by Grainger and Campbell from 26th Battalion and by Armstrong's Sherman from 20th Armoured Regiment have been treated as separate events in the New Zealand official histories whereas we think they may refer to the same tank. This is supported by the 26th Battalion unit diary, which reported the destruction of only two tanks upon reaching 'Greyhound' – these would have been Tigers 211 and 212. Likewise the 20th Armoured Regiment diary reports only two Tigers destroyed by the unit, one by a 17-pounder Sherman (i.e. Dowricks's) and one that suffered multiple hits from a standard 75mm Sherman (i.e. Armstrong's). Apart from that, the diary only reports an incident where one tank troop had outmanoeuvred a further Tiger forcing its crew to abandon it and blow it up — a clear reference to Tiger 200.

Moreover, photographs of Tiger 211 show a hole in its gun barrel, strengthening the argument that it was the same tank as engaged by Campbell and Grainger. Campbell's claim that the round from the PIAT gun caused spalling from the armour plate on the inside of the turret seems unlikely as this is not the effect of hollow-charge weapons. A further clue is that, though the Tigers around Massa Lombarda were some of the most photographed of the Italian campaign, no photographs have come to light of any more KO'd Tigers in the area, other than the ones marked on the map.

Perhaps the most contentious part of this story has been the reporting in various publications of this incident as either a 'massacre' or the 'murder' of Panzersoldaten (tank troops). Friedrich Huhle was adamant that their version of events had been misinterpreted. It was Kleine and Kühn who first used the term 'Massaker' in the German edition of their book, possibly because of the use of a phrase from one veteran's account: 'das sinnlose blindwütige Feuer' which was interpreted by them to mean 'senseless frenzied killing' when a more correct interpretation is 'senseless frenzied firing'. Unfortunately the former version was what was used when the book was ultimately translated into English.

The New Zealand version of the events is not without its faults and shows evidence of sanitation. Armstrong was credited in the official account as being upset when the supporting infantry 'got into the tank' and started looting it but implied that he was missing out on his share of that loot. McCully maintains instead that Armstrong was upset by the infantry looting the tank and ignoring the plight of the wounded around it. In addition to this we have evidence of a German soldier being shot by New Zealand troops after surrendering, though whether he was killed outright or simply badly wounded is not clear. Not that his behaviour after capture justified what happened to him.

The 20th Armoured Regiment history is not clear on when this happened but the way it reads in their account these events occurred in close proximity to each other and within a short space of time. In fact this may not have been the case. Unfortunately the 26th Battalion history says nothing at all and in the absence of any witnesses to this event coming forward it may not be possible to throw any more light on what actually did happen.

There is also the question as to whether it was Armstrong who intervened on behalf of the other German prisoners as Dölle stated in his account. McCully was certain, when questioned about it, that if Armstrong had observed this incident he would have told the rest of his crew. The fact that he did not suggests that it may have been a soldier from the 26th Battalion who intervened on behalf of the remaining prisoners.

For all of us this investigation has been an absorbing experience. Not only for the opportunity it has given us to unravel in more precise detail the events that occurred on one day and in one small area of Italy but also to be involved in what is almost a healing process for its participants by bringing former enemies together and helping them come to terms with what happened that day. For myself, the son of a man who spent three years in a German prisoner of war camp, this has also been a fascinating exercise; befriending people who were my father's former adversaries and, as he did, coming to terms with the fact that they are no different from us. As Jim Moodie (OC, C Squadron, 20th Armoured Regiment in 1945) said to Huhle in a letter: 'We should never have been enemies'. And the ripples go wider than that as I discovered when I made contact with Dölle's daughter, Mathilde Hall in the United States. After learning that she had known nothing of her father's war service I have been helping her build up her knowledge of his past.

We are grateful to the assistance of the following veterans for their help in the preparation of this article: on the German side Friedrich Huhle, Berthold Dölle and Hans-Heinrich von der Gabelentz, and on the New Zealand side Lindsay McCully, Bruce Grainger and Ron Biggs. In addition we are grateful to the following people for their help: Pera Hodson, Betty James, Jocelyn Armstrong, Noel Pepperell, Felix Barron, Marco Belogi, Colin Smith, Paul Napier, Terry Brown, Mr Brunone, Adolfo Tabanelli, Francesco Vacchi and Mathilde Hall.

Some relics from the Tigers knocked out at Massa Lombarda still survive. This escape hatch now serves as a work bench for Mr Brunone.

More than 8,200 flying bombs were ground-launched at Britain of which some 5,200 crossed the coast. The London Civil Defence Region received 2,353 hits which killed just over 5,000. All told, there were 6,184 deaths in Britain caused by the V1. The site in the Ygot valley was preserved in 1997 in memory of all the victims of the V-weapons.

THE V1 SITE AT VAL-YGOT

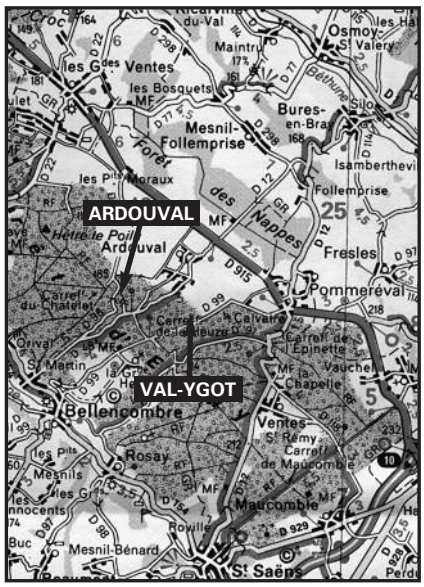
By Peter Gosling

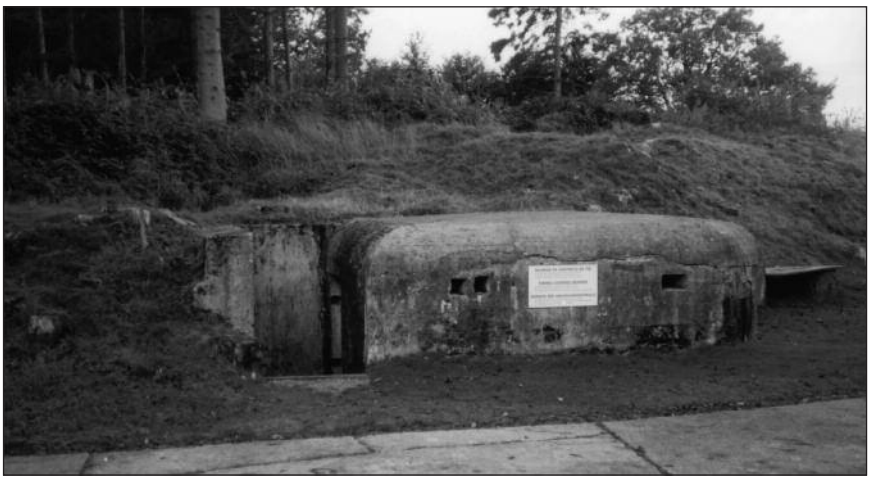
It is not often that you come across something that brings the past back into such sharp focus. This is what happened to me when on a recent visit to Normandy in northern France. It was in the forest called D'Eawy at Val-Ygot close to Pommeréval on the D99 just off the D915 road that links Dieppe to the A28 autoroute just south of the small town of Neufchatel-en-Bray, and it was here that I spotted the sign pointing to a V1 site. On the edge of the forest that skirts the road a short path leads to a complete — well almost, as the result of British bombing in 1944 — site for the launching of Fieseler Fi 103 flying bombs aimed at London.

In this area of France there were 116 sites, some permanent and others the simplified 'modified' type, each equipped with all the necessary facilities for accommodating the personnel required for the preparation and launching of the missiles. Many more sites were built to the north and south of this area. The German forces selected 400 sites each covering around six acres and most were located within 160 miles of London, their prime target. Each secret site was carefully placed and camouflaged and usually hidden deep in woodland, often on existing forest tracks. Their construction began in August 1943 but, as it turned out, not all were completed and able to fire their missiles.

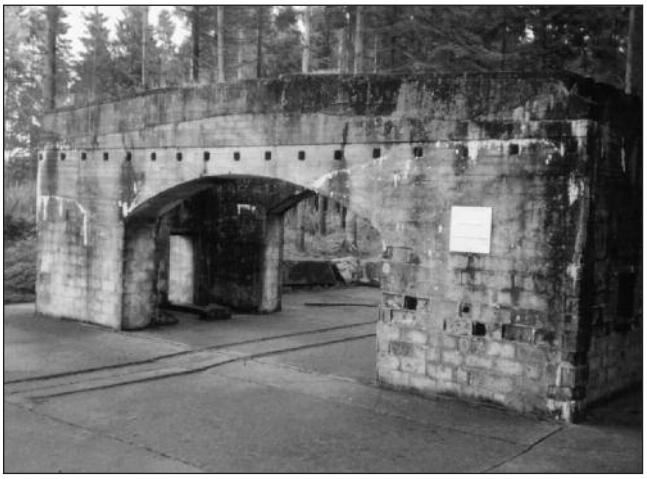
A typical site, such as that at Val-Ygot, consisted of over a dozen separate buildings. Four of these were to accommodate technicians and the firing party with separate quarters for officers and men. Once delivered each missile was unpacked in a 'waiting hangar' before being moved to a storage facility.

When the Allies first got wind of the creation of the flying bomb sites, many aerial reconnaissance photographs were taken of the area and for a long time they were puzzled by unusual-shaped buildings of which there were two or three on each site. They appeared strange as they were in the form of a ski, being 80 metres long and 4.30 metres wide with a kink at the end. It was eventually discovered that they were used for storing the V1 missiles. Each 'ski' building could hold ten V1s and the bend at the end was to stop blast damage being funnelled into the

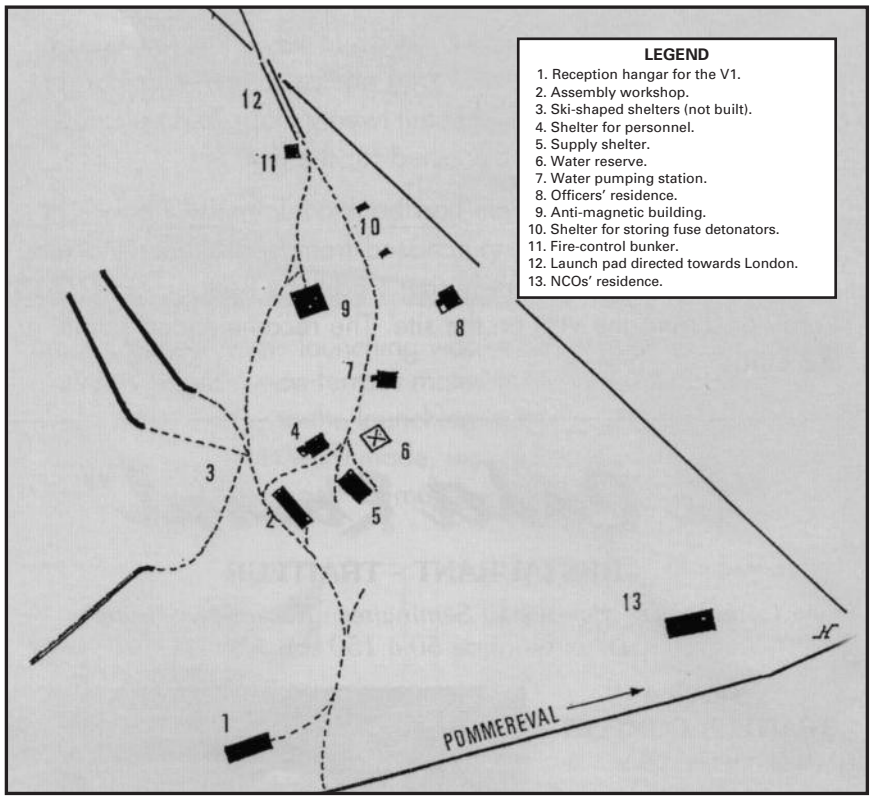




The installation at Val-Ygot was a 'ski' site, so named because of the tell-tale ski-shaped storage buildings although these were never completed at this particular location. Val-Ygot was never used in anger but this is the fire-control bunker from where weapons would have been launched against Britain.



Left: **Nicely-preserved workshop and** *(right)* **the anti-magnetic building with its arched opening where the guidance system of the V1 was set up in an area free of metallic interference. The launch ramp itself came from the Musée du l'Atlantique at Audinghen in the Pas-de-Calais while the replica V1 was constructed by T. D. L. Replica Spitfires of Lowestoft, Suffolk.**



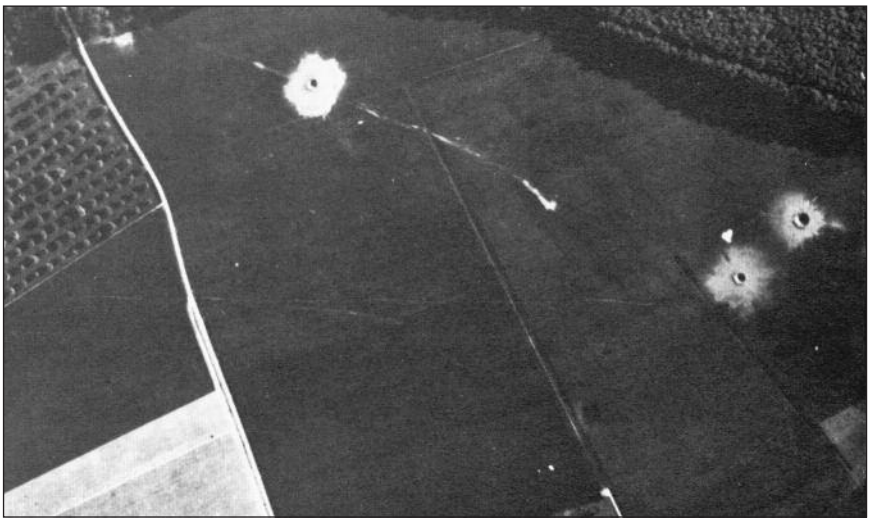
The launching ramp was aimed at a specific target, usually London although some sites were built to fire at British south coast towns, and inclined at between 10° and 15° to the horizontal. To make the missile ready for firing it was loaded onto the launch cradle that was mated with a piston that would be forced along the slotted tube carrying the V1 with it along the track. When the launch took place the piston was driven along the track by high-pressure steam generated by a mixture of hydrogen peroxide and calcium permanganate. When the V1 reached the end of the ramp it was moving at around 250 miles per hour at which point the piston and cradle fell away leaving the missile to continue on its journey propelled by its Argus pulse-jet engine.

A visitor to the Val-Ygot site can see the anti-magnetic building, the assemby workshop, waiting hangar, quarters for the troops and the launch bunker, all in remarkably good condition despite Allied bombing. Some of the rails that would have been used for transporting the missiles between the various parts of the site are in situ, but there is no sign of the ski-shaped buildings. The centrepiece of the whole area is the business end of the 150-foot-long launching ramp complete with a replica of the weapon sitting ready to be set off on its one-way trip to London. This site is probably one of the better preserved in that part of France although Val-Ygot was never completed and so no firings ever took place there.

Peter Gosling appreciates the help given him by Dominique de Marco in researching this article.

depths of the building in the event of an air raid. The missiles were transported between the various parts of the site by trolleys via a simple rail system. (The layout can clearly be seen on the plan of the Val-Ygot site.)

When a V1 was to be fired it would be passed to a workshop where the final assembly was to be carried out; the fuel tank filled; a battery fitted, and the compressed air tanks charged. Then, prior to being fired, the missile would be passed to the anti-magnetic building to set the compass carried on each V1. This building provided an area where there were no stray magnetic fields to affect the setting of the compass so that the direction of flight would be controlled automatically and accurately. Any deviations from the flight path were then corrected by adjustments made by the gyro carried on board. These anti-magnetic buildings were nick-named 'the square buildings' by the reconnaissance pilots whose photographs soon made the Allies realise that with their arched entrances and exits these buildings were of great importance and were to be the main target of any raids on sites. Also in the 'square buildings' the wings were fitted, detonators for the explosive charge in the nose put into place and the airlog set to the time of flight.



There were in fact two V1 sites in the Forêt d'Eawy: the uncompleted and unused ski site at Val-Ygot and its 'modified' site replacement at Ardouval-Le Chatelet. The effect of misfires from the modified site are clearly evident in front of the launch ramp which is located on the far side of the road.

THE CANADIANS RETURN TO KENT

The Essex and Kent Scottish Regiment can trace its history back to the early years of the 18th century when loyalists in Canada were subjected to attacks from Americans, French and indiginous Indians.

In those days, every man belonged to the militia but it was the first raid by Irish Fenians from the United States in 1866 at Windsor in Essex County which eventually led to the amalgamation of the independent militia companies into a formal unit: the 21st Essex Battalion of Infantry in 1885.

The regiment — now designated the 21st Regiment Essex Fusiliers — was placed on active service on August 6, 1914, it being given the task of providing reinforcements for the Canadian Corps in France and Flanders. The 1st (Western Ontario) and 18th (London, Ontario) Battalions of the Canadian Expeditionary Force were largely made up from Essex Fusilier members who achieved many notable battle honours including Ypres, Hill 70, Passchendaele, Amiens and the Somme.

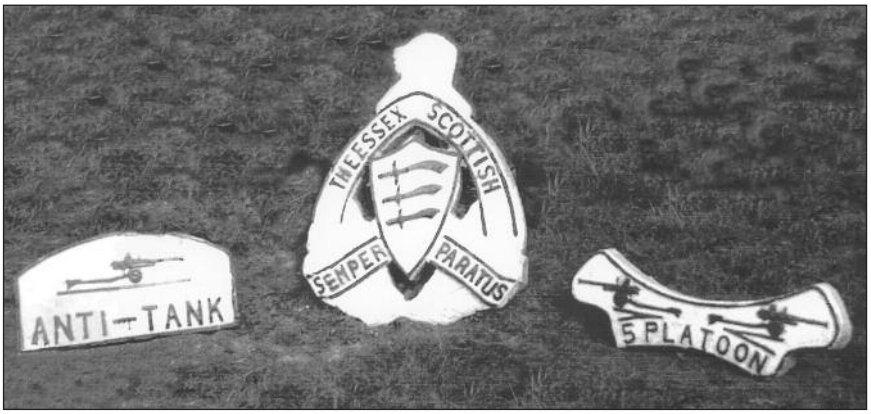
In 1926, association was made with the Essex Regiment of the British Army and the following year the Canadian regiment was redesignated the Essex Scottish whereupon it was outfitted with the MacGregor tartan.

The Essex Scottish Regiment was mobilised on September 1, 1939 and sailed for Britain in July 1940. Within its ranks were a substantial number of American volunteers; also several officers and men from the Kent Regiment based at Chatham, Ontario, the main role of the latter unit being defence of Canada as part of the 14th Canadian Infantry Battalion, 8th Canadian Infantry Division of Pacific Command. (The Kent Regiment was stood down on March 30, 1946.)

Part of the 4th Infantry Brigade of the Canadian 2nd Division, the Essex Scottish contributed over 550 officers and other ranks to Operation 'Jubilee' in August 1942 to Dieppe (see *After the Battle* No. 5) out of which only 52 returned to Britain. This devastating loss was rebuilt in time for Operation 'Overlord' and the Essex Scottish disembarked with the follow-up 2nd Division on the coast of Normandy on July 5, 1944.

Prior to going to France the regiment as part of the 4th Canadian Infantry Brigade was camped at Barham, in Kent, on land belonging to the Clough family. The main body of the Essex Scottish men were in woodland near Lodge Lees which lay on the Breach Downs, their camp being named Stump Hollow.

Top: **Members of the Essex Scottish Regiment arrived in the United Kingdom from Canada in July 1940. Unfortunately no names are given in this picture dated February 24, 1942 taken at St Leonards — the seaside town on the south coast.** *Above:* **Canadian troops had been stationed further afield in Kent, this gun team from the 1st Field Regiment, 1st Canadian Infantry Division, Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, being pictured at Barham. (NAC)**



And it was at Barham that this story really begins. The Essex Scottish moved there in the spring of 1944 in preparation for their move to the Continent after D-Day. To keep the men on their toes their CO, Lieutenant-Colonel Bruce MacDonald, set up an inter-unit competition and Private Morris Rozell (pictured *left* after he was commissioned as an artillery officer later in the war) of No. 5 Anti-Tank Platoon came up with the idea of fabricating the regiment's cap badge in cement and making two subsidiary plaques to champion the platoon's entry.

The previous year, while the unit was working up at Billinghurst, the commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel P. J. S. 'Bruce' MacDonald, had set up an internal competition. No. 5 Anti-Tank Platoon were determined to outdo all the others and Private Morris Rozell came up with the idea of casting a large replica of the regiment's cap badge in cement, and to produce two smaller castings highlighting their particular platoon.

Their efforts paid off and the platoon were rewarded with the prize -– an extra week's leave –- although after a couple of days most of the men had run out of money!

When No. 5 Anti-Tank Platoon moved to Barham in the spring of 1944, the three pieces of sculptured concrete were set up in front of the platoon lines in Walderchain Wood opposite the farm buildings at Lodge Lees. Many of the younger members of the Essex Scottish were 'adopted' by the Goddard family and in particular Mrs Goddard who opened her kitchen to the Canadians. It was not uncommon to find upwards of a dozen young men enjoying tea and home-made snacks around the kitchen table and Laurence Goddard, who was only slightly younger than the Canadians, considered many of them personal friends. Before the unit embarked they left the castings with the Goddard family and told the farmer, Robert Goddard (himself a veteran RSM of the 5th Seaforth Highlanders who spent 2½ years in the trenches in WW1, suffering grievous facial wounds and being awarded the Military Medal and Bar), that they would return for them after the war was over.

Nevertheless, the delay in making the collection lasted nearly all of 60 years! After VE-Day, the First Canadian Army was repatriated back to Canada directly from the Netherlands, which meant that the Essex Scottish had little opportunity to return to England to collect the cap badge. Also, during the following years, the Essex Scottish had amalgamated with the Kent Regiment to become the Essex and Kent Scottish Regiment on October 1, 1954. (Although the Kent Regiment had been disbanded in 1946, a battalion had continued to serve with the Reserve Army.)

No. 5 Platoon were the clear winners, enjoying a week's leave as the prize. Before the unit quit Barham, they assured the farmer Robert Goddard — seen here with his wife Dorothy and border collie Groaty — that they would return to collect the castings after the war.

The Goddard family and friends pictured with the forgotten castings in the field opposite Lodge Lees. L-R: Robert's son Laurence; Bill Page, Robert Goddard's first employee; his daughters Margaret and Muriel; two Land Army girls working on the farm; a cousin, Henry Smith serving with the Canadian Military Police, and Dorothy.

When no one returned to collect the castings, Mr Goddard moved the smaller castings near to the house and the large cap badge to the corner of his field and there it remained for the next 40 years beneath the undergrowth . . . that is until one sunny day in the early 1980s. Half a dozen cyclists of the Thanet Road Club were on a tour around the back roads of Kent and it was while they were on the road between Denton and Elham that one bike had a puncture, right opposite Lodge Lees. While the cyclists waited for the wheel to be repaired, one of the members poking about in the corner of the field uncovered the hidden concrete cap badge.

As the design appeared to be of military origin, when he got home Ernie Abdella contacted his brother in law, Eric Bull, who was a keen military collector. Eric dutifully noted the location of the badge and told Ed Storey, another fellow militaria collector, about it. At the time, Ed Storey was a corporal in the Canadian Military Engineers, Mapping and

Laurence and Margaret pose on the same spot in the Lodge Lees field in March 2003.

After the war, Laurence's father moved the castings to the corner of the field and it was there that they were discovered one day in the early 1980s by members of the Thanet Road Club. *Left:* **Morris Crow took this shot of Ernie Abdella, Mike Kneller and Ronnie Winter soon after the discovery.** *Right:* **Twenty years later Ernie and Ron re-enact the photo. Mike was too infirm to make the reunion in September 2003 but the others still regularly undertake long cycle rides.**

Through a friend of a friend, news of the discovery reached Ed Storey, a Canadian serviceman who was also an avid collector. (We met Ed Storey more recently in issue 109 as he was one of the sentries who took part in the vigil in Ottawa for the Canadian Unknown Soldier in May 2000.) On his visit to the UK in 1986 Ed looked up Eric Bull and they both went to inspect the badges which were in a rather sorry state. (Ed Storey)

Charting Establishment (MCE), and a frequent visitor to the UK. While on leave in the UK, Ed would tour the Continent on battlefield tours with the Military Vehicle Conservation Group and would also travel around the south of England purchasing militaria for his growing collection as well as establishing contact with other fellow enthusiasts. It was during one of these trips in 1986 that he and Eric drove to Lodge Lees to view the badge, at which time they recognised it as belonging to a Canadian regiment, the Essex Scottish. It was also during this visit that Ed Storey made contact with the Goddard family and was given some of the details of how the concrete cap badge came to be located at Lodge Lees.

After locating the cap badge, Ed attempted, without success, to get it and the two smaller castings returned to Canada. Nevertheless he maintained contact through correspondence with the Goddard family and visited Lodge Lees on two other occasions in order to keep track of the badge.

In mid-2002 Ed, now a Warrant Officer in MCE and stationed in Ottawa, got an unexpected letter from Laurence Goddard stating that he had seen some of the correspondence concerning the concrete cap badge and that he would like to see the badge and smaller casting returned to Canada. This time Ed's efforts finally bore fruit when his letter landed on the desk of the Honorary Colonel, Colonel W. Rae Martin. He was very enthusiastic as was the commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Phil Berthiaume, and a recce party guided by Ed Storey arrived in the UK in March 2003 to plan the rescue.

Over the following years, Ed made efforts to arouse interest in the repatriation of the unique wartime relics to Canada but it was not until Colonel W. Rae Martin, the Honorary Colonel of the Essex and Kent Scottish, heard of their existence that things began to move. In March Warrant Officer Storey, green combats centre, guided an advance recce party to Britain. Here Laurence Goddard explains the history of the artifacts to Master Warrant Officer Kirk Drew, Colonel Martin, and the CO of the regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Phil Berthiaume.

One of Laurence's most treasured possessions, saved from the wartime days, was the original sign which once marked the Essex Scottish wartime encampment in Walderchain Wood.

This he presented to Colonel Berthiaume . . . and even took the CO back to the exact spot where the entrance to the Stump Hollow camp lay in 1944!

Left: **Over the years Laurence's metal-detecting friends, John Fox, Tom Page (son of Bill Page — see page 52), and Ed Hawkes, had been scouring the wood for artifacts, finding numerous items ranging from buttons and razors to mortar bombs and anti-tank shells!** *Right:* **Having been rendered inert, the items were put on display at the official presentation on September 18, 2003 . . . on the same kitchen table at which the lads of the Essex Scottish had been entertained at the farm during the war!**

The Canadians were given an enthusiastic reception by Laurence Goddard who expressed his delight that the concrete cap badge was finally going to be collected — albeit some 59 years later! Lawrence also showed the Canadians relics which had been found in the old Stump Hollow campsite by metal-detecting military enthusiasts John Fox, Tom Page and Ed Hawkes, and they offered to let all the items go to Canada.

The hand-over ceremony on September 18, 2003, was touchingly orchestrated by Master Warrant Officer Kirk G. Drew. Laurence Goddard, John Fox and Desmond Sands, suitably armed with deactivated No. 1 Mk III Lee-Enfields, were 'impressed' to act as the Old Guard which was then ceremoniously replaced by the New Guard comprising from the Essex and Kent Scots, Sergeant Jeff Morrison and Corporals Brent Austin, Koy Cummings, Michael Froese, Michael Timmermans and led by Pipe Major Warrant Officer Al Clark.

In his address, Colonel Martin thanked the Goddard family 'for the support given to us as we come to retrieve these artifacts left behind in those days of the later stages of the Second World War, and kept safely here at Lodge Lees. In particular, we remember the love given to our wartime members 60 years ago by the Goddard family as the regiment was bivouaced in the area prior to going to Normandy.

It was Master Warrant Officer Drew's idea that the hand-over ceremony should include Desmond Sands, left, Laurence's teenage friend and Home Guard colleague and John Fox, right, acting with Laurence, centre, as the 'Old Guard' who had kept a watching brief on the castings since the war. Here the trio are rehearsed in their duties.

Left: **Colonel Martin opened the proceedings by explaining the background.** *Right:* **The New Guard was then marched out and the service of dedication was conducted by the Revd David Roper, Rector of St John the Baptist, Barham.**

Laurence Goddard: 'New Guard! I trust you to look after these replicas at all times in the future. Old Guard have been looking after these stones for the past 55 years, and are now in your charge. Any questions? Old Guard . . . Fall . . . out!'

'I am told by the surviving members of the anti-tank platoon that these castings were displayed in front of the platoon lines with a flag-pole at the rear, and each morning a platoon member was designated to raise the rampant lion flag [of Scotland] at the same time as the Union Jack was being raised at headquarters. The procedure was reversed each evening.

'When returned to Canada all the pieces will be refurbished and then put in a place of honour in the new armouries now under construction in Windsor.

'This ceremony is also significant to us as the Department of National Defence has given the regiment a new mission element: the creation of an anti-tank platoon. It would be our fondest hope that as many as are here today could join us in the fall of 2004 in Windsor when the new armouries will be officially opened and dedicated. We expect the ceremony to be done in the presence of our Colonel-in-Chief, Prince Michael of Kent.'

The New Guard having taken over, Lieutenant-Colonel Berthiaume closed the proceedings by reading a letter from the regiment's Colonel-in-Chief, Prince Michael of Kent: 'I am delighted that this cap badge, which has laid at the same spot near Folkestone since 1944, is now to be returned to Canada, refurbished and placed in a prominent place in the new armouries under construction in Windsor, Ontario. Today's ceremony allows us to demonstrate publicly the continuing ties that bind the regiment to its friends in the United Kingdom. The friendship and hospitality of the Goddard family, on whose land the cap badge has been lying all this time, is greatly appreciated.'

Laurence Goddard proudly wears a WWII-period Essex Scottish cap badge, stitched to his tie, that he was given during the war.